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THE

HISTORY

OF

MOHAMMEDANISM,

AND ITS SECTS;

DERIVED CHIEFLY FROM ORIENTAL SOURCES.

BY

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PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
THE COMMITTEE OF GENERAL LITERATURE AND EDUCATION,
APPOINTED BY THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING
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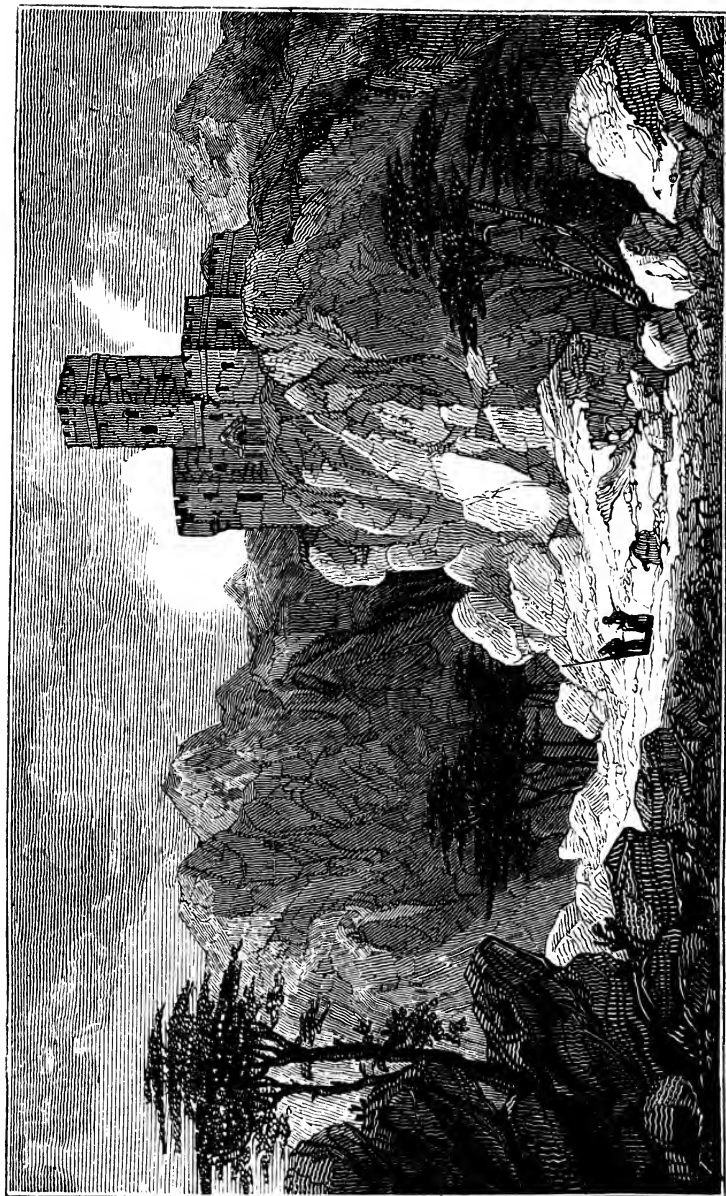
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THE CASTLE OF ALAMOOT.

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TO THE
COMMITTEE
OF THE
ORIENTAL TRANSLATION FUND;

THIS LITTLE WORK

IS GRATEFULLY AND RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY

THEIR SINCERE ADMIRER,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE best preface to this work will be the history of the circumstances that led to its being written. Among a parcel of old books that contributed to the amusement of my younger days, was a torn copy of SALE'S *Korán*, to which I took a great fancy, probably from its connexion with those favourites of youth, the *Arabian Nights*. Several years afterwards, when studying divinity in Trinity College, Dublin, it struck me that many of the strange tales I met with in the Rabbinical writings, and many of the early heresies to which I found allusions in the ancient fathers of the Eastern Church, were matters that I had somewhere met with before. My old recollections of the *Korán* came to my aid, and I became convinced that there was such a strong resemblance between the corruptions of Judaism and Christianity, and the creed promulgated by the reformer of Mecca, as to establish a strong probability of the several erroneous systems having been derived from the same source. Subsequent investigations strengthened this conclusion. My acquaintance with Arabic being very limited, I have not been able, save in a few instances, to consult original

documents ; but I found more than enough of materials supplied in the numerous translations from Arabic works published both by British and Continental scholars. The valuable series of works published by the Oriental Translation Committee proved of especial service ; and I should be ungrateful were I to omit this opportunity of expressing my gratitude for the kind and liberal treatment I received from the Managers of the Royal Asiatic Society, of which that committee forms so important a branch.

My first design was to trace the operation of the few metaphysical principles which I found at the root of the different Christian heresies, one of which Mohammedanism assuredly is, on the character and conduct of the nations by which they were adopted ; and also, by the reverse process, to discover what was the source of error common to all these various modifications of misapplied principles. Mr. Colebrook's *Essay on the Philosophy of the Hindús*, and Professor Wilson's account of the Hindú sects, convinced me that the Indian philosophy contained the germ of all the speculations that have led to the corruption of truth in the East, and especially to the idealism of the Alexandrian school, whence so many of the first heresies were derived. But such an investigation would have led to no practical result, the basis of these speculations being dreamy and unsubstantial ; leaving metaphysics, therefore, I tried to trace historically the progress of opinion in Asia, from the days of Zoroaster to those of Mohammed. This subject occupies the first two chapters of the follow-

ing work. There is one statement in the first chapter, of the correctness of which I now entertain a doubt: I have said that the legend on which Parnell's *Hermit* is founded was Arabian, not because it occurs in the Korán, but because as originally told by Ephrem Syrus, it seems to be connected with the history of Job. Professor Lee's arguments, in his edition of Henry Martin's *Controversy*, have convinced me that Mohammed took the tale from Ephrem; but where the Syrian prelate found it, I cannot venture to conjecture.

In describing the state of Arabia at the time of Mohammed's coming, I have followed popular legends, rather than the history attempted to be founded on them. Without entering into any discussion of principles, it is sufficiently obvious that the character of an age or nation must be better illustrated by its popular literature than by its formal history; the former being generally a personification, if such an expression be allowable, of the popular mind.

The life of Mohammed is founded chiefly on his own auto-biographical hints in the Korán, and on the great collection of Mohammedan traditions published at Calcutta. Much useful information was derived from Reinaud's works, especially his *Monumens Arabes, Persans et Turcs, du Cabinet de M. le Duc de Blacas*, and from Mr. Renouard's contributions to the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana*. "The narrative of the night-journey to heaven," has been placed in the Appendix: for of this monstrous

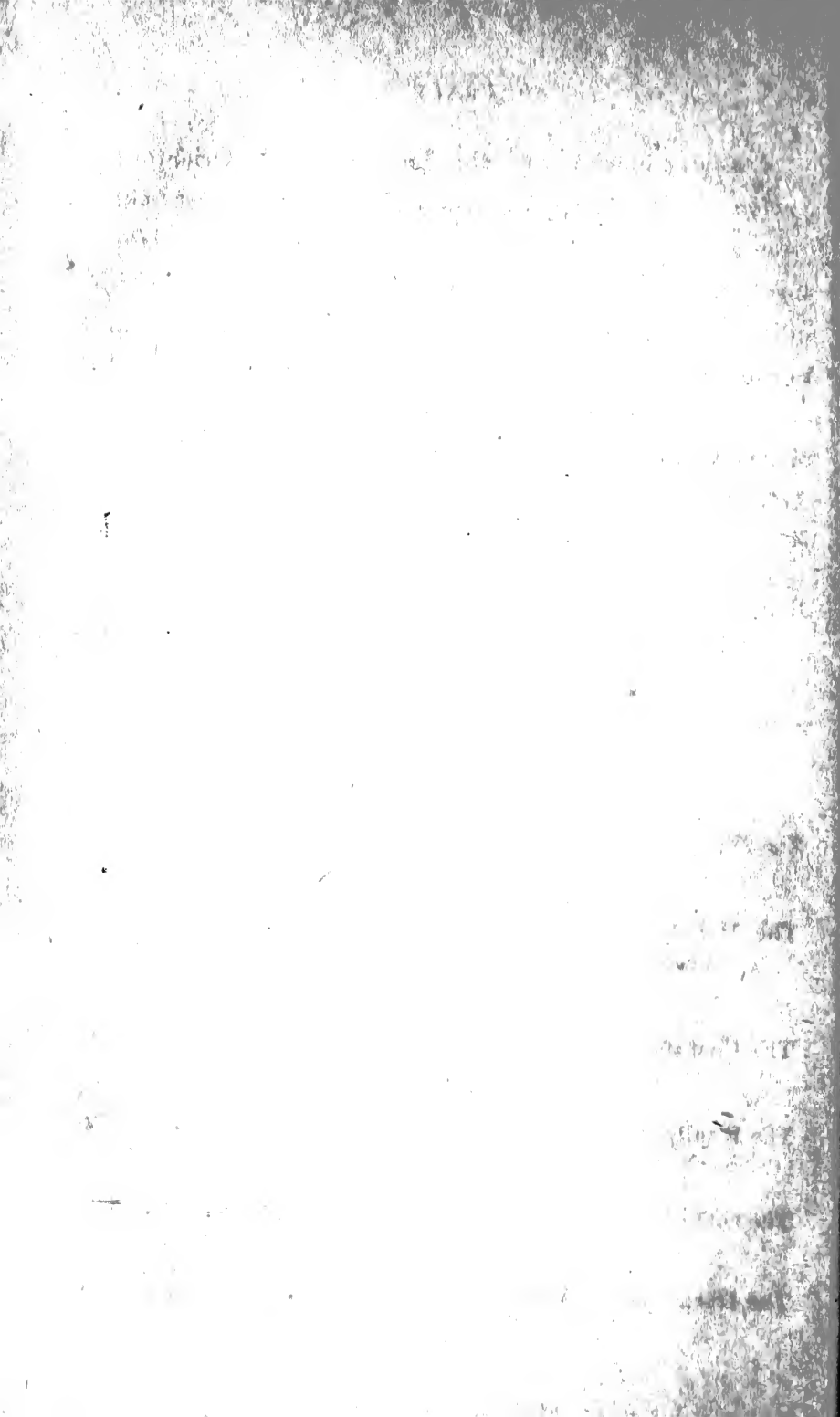
fable I believe Mohammed himself to have been perfectly innocent.

The Arabic creed that follows, was first translated by Adrian Reland; I have had the assistance of a kind friend in revising the translation; the notes and illustrations are my own. The rest of the volume is devoted to the history of the mode in which the religion of Mohammed has developed itself; for it seems to me that the sects of Islám have all departed further from truth than the original creed did, and that their additional corruptions have been derived from the same source as the errors of Mohammed.

The orthography of oriental names has never been fixed; I have endeavoured to follow Sir William Jones's system with some modifications; but having originally learned the Arabic alphabet from a French grammar, I have frequently lapsed into the French system, especially in introducing *c* before *h* to represent a harsh aspiration. For this, and many other errors, I must beg the indulgence of my readers.

In stating that this work is derived from Oriental sources, I mean simply that I have consulted translations of established reputation, and have had the assistance of Oriental scholars, when, on any matter of doubt, I referred to untranslated works. Some new sources of information were opened to me just as the work had gone through the press; I have studied them diligently, but find in them nothing to weaken any statement I have made.

It only remains to add, that having seen Mr. Crichton's *Arabia*, during the progress of the work through the press, I contracted my brief account of the Wahabees, the only part in which my work was likely to come in collision with his ; partly because the history of the Wahabean war was not necessarily connected with my subject, but principally that I may have the pleasure of referring my readers to the excellent account of the present condition of Arabia contained in his volumes.



THE HISTORY OF MOHAMMEDANISM.

INTRODUCTION.

THE history of Mohammedanism forms, if not an essential, at least a very useful and interesting portion of Christian knowledge, since it enables us to compare with revelation the most influential system ever devised by human reason. Its claims to such competition are great and obvious: though its origin was obscure, its progress was rapid; with apparently disproportioned means it obtained the most brilliant triumphs; its converts were made by tribes and nations; its sway has been extensive, and its dominion permanent. That these circumstances have furnished many a sarcasm to the sneering sceptic, and, perhaps, sometimes shaded with doubt the mind of the true believer, is a matter of sorrow rather than surprise, but that too many advocates of our holy religion have aided the infidel, by accepting his sophistical statement of the question, may justly fill us with astonishment. If the terms of the matter in dispute were fairly explained, there is not a human being possessed of ordinary capacity that would not find the entire argument, which the sceptic founds on the success of Mohammed, a mass of disguised assumptions and wilful misrepresentations.

It must be borne in mind, that the question with the sceptic is between any religion and none, consequently that

the comparative merits of any given religious systems are indifferent to the issue; we must also remember, that all his forces are concentrated for attack, because he has absolutely nothing to defend; we cannot carry the war into his camp, for, like the Mongolian tribes, his belief has no local habitation, and scarcely a name. His reasoning is simply this:—since an acknowledged imposture resembles Christianity in prevalence and permanence, our disbelief of the one should lead us to doubt the other. The argument will not bear a moment's examination: in the first place it assumes the accidents of religion as tests, and pays no regard to the essentials. The early success of the Christian faith, its triumphant advance in spite of powers and principalities, its acceptance by nearly all civilized nations, its continuance unaltered by the changes of realm and the chances of time, are not by themselves evidences of Christianity; they are links in a chain of evidence, parts of an unanswerable system of demonstration, but apart from that system they prove nothing. The historic evidence of our faith does not begin with its promulgation; it ascends to the very first formation of man, and connects itself with every period in the annals of the human race. Our limited faculties prevent us from seeing how every event is directed by the Moral Governor of the universe, but Revelation aids us in the history of one peculiar people, and shows us a whole course of events directly leading to the advent of a promised Messiah, though few of them taken separately had any such discoverable tendency. It may be that error is a necessary apprenticeship and discipline to prepare the mind for the reception of truth, and that Revelation may be withheld until Reason has learned, by bitter experience, the secret of its deficiencies, and become conscious of its own weakness. Does the sceptic forget that error arises

not from falsehood, but from mistaking partial for absolute truth?

But in this argument, the obstacles against which the two creeds had to contend are studiously confounded, and the great characteristic of the Gospel wilfully omitted. Christianity was opposed, not only to men collectively, but to man individually; it had to contend, not simply against artificial institutions, but natural propensities; it found enemies in every bosom as well as in every state. Does the infidel doubt the difficulty of laying aside the pride of reason and the pomp of philosophy, to assume the humble, teachable, disposition of little children? He, at all events, has not been able to learn the hard lesson. Far different are the impediments to be overcome by a creed which promises ample indulgence of the passions, and a faith which demands that we should "crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts."

Again, the rapid progress of Mohammedanism is an isolated fact; we cannot connect it with any conceivable chain of blessings; we can trace to it no continuous results calculated to promote human happiness. Christianity, on the other hand, was preached when Pagan civilization was in its decadence; it arrested the progress of the moral depravation then rapidly spreading over the Roman empire; it tempered the ferocity of the Northern barbarians, who rushed from their forests breathing fire and slaughter; it preserved the elements of social happiness when threatened with utter annihilation, and it supplied the means by which order was subsequently restored out of confusion. It may, indeed, be asserted, that Mohammedanism was an improvement on the Paganism of Arabia; nay, that it was superior to many perversions of Judaism and Christianity, prevalent in the East at the time of its promulgation; but then it

contained not within itself the germs of future and further improvements; its character was stereotype, once impressed upon a country, it could receive no amelioration.

In comparing the prevalence of the two creeds we must not omit the intellectual character of the nations in which they prevail; one triumphs amid barbarism, the other rules in the centre of civilization. Now that credence should have any weight as a testimony to truth, it is necessary that the belief should be founded on reason, and that the witnesses should have both capacity and opportunity for investigation. With armies for its missionaries, and parks of artillery for its apostles, an irrational creed may be imposed upon nations; but there is not so tangible a means of accounting for the success of a religion whose soldiers were humble, unarmed preachers, and whose only weapons were argument and persuasion.

The permanence of the Mohammedan creed during twelve centuries, must not be acknowledged without some qualification. There was a tale current in the middle ages, of a knight shot dead by an arrow*, but his horse still carried the corpse over the field, and the opposite host retained their terror for the prowess of the warrior long after his life was departed. Just such is the present state of the Mohammedan faith; its spirit and its vitality have departed; it never recovered from any corruptions engendered within, scarcely from any shocks sustained from without; every disease became permanent in its system, every wound changed into a festering sore, until at length it is little better than the warlike carcase; its life and soul are gone for ever. The very Mussulmans themselves confess that their faith is in a rapid process of decay, and that although the external ordinances are still obeyed, the inter-

* A legend nearly similar may be found in Ariosto.

nal efficacy is hopelessly destroyed. Now there is nothing more remarkable in the history of Christianity than its recuperative energies: there were times when it became corrupt, but it contained the principles of renovation within itself, and it came forth from the struggle with new vigour and untarnished lustre.

But the complete answer to the infidel is, that Mohammedanism is not wholly a system of imposture; it is partially so, but it is also partially a direct imitation of Christianity, and an imitation that preserves no small portion of the divine original. Its history will clearly prove that its success was due to the truths and not to the falsehoods it contained; that its triumphs were obtained through the portion of the Christian system which it borrowed, and, therefore, that so far as its permanence and prevalence can be quoted as evidences, they bear more decisive testimony in favour of the Gospel than the Koran. It is on this account that we regard the history of Islámism as a useful portion of Christian knowledge, and that we dwell upon it rather than the history of the Saracenic empire, which acquired more power in one century than Rome in the whole period of her sway. We regard the history of Mohammedanism as our best aid in forming a right estimate of the Oriental character, at a time when the relations between Europe and Asia are undergoing a revolution, whose consequences no man can calculate.

That Mohammedanism was an imitation of Christianity was not merely the confession, but the boast of its founder; he declared that he preached to his countrymen no new doctrine; that the tenets of Islám were the same that God had originally revealed to Adam, to Noah, and to Abraham which Moses had received amid the thunders and the lightnings of Mount Sinai, and which the Incarnate Word

had taught in Judea and Galilee. Neither do the modern Moslems assert the originality of their Creed ; on the contrary they declare that nothing but wilful perversity could prevent both Jews and Christians from finding the doctrines of Islám in the Bible. Their own account of the origin of their faith begins not with Mohammed, but with Adam, or rather with the angelic beings that existed before the creation of the world.] We shall, in the next chapter, allow them to speak for themselves, and scepticism itself, after the perusal of their narrative, must confess that the Mohammedan creed, and the Mohammedan history of faith, is in its essentials borrowed from the Christian. Many of their traditions will be found to differ from the Scriptural narratives—few, if any, to contradict them; a great portion of them can clearly be traced to the Talmud, but there are some manifestly belonging to the Arabians. Besides showing the derivative character of the religion taught by the impostor of Mecca, we think that these legends tend to establish the historical importance of the Old Testament, by proving that the persons mentioned in the sacred records, not only really existed, but were the heroes of popular tradition in all the nations of Western Asia. They are interesting as mere matters of curiosity, but they have still higher claims to our regard, because they show that the Jews were a people whose literature was generally diffused over the East, and whose history was familiarly known to the neighbouring tribes and states. If there had been any falsification of the facts recorded by the inspired penmen, it is certain, consequently, that we should have found a contradictory statement in some of the Arabian historians.

Though Mohammedanism is a spurious imitation of Christianity, yet there are parts of its creed from which many Christian sects may learn useful lessons. It strenu-

ously condemns idolatry, and the adoration of any human being, however distinguished; it asserts in the strongest terms, the great truths of the Incarnation and Miraculous Conception. We are not, therefore, surprised at the asperity with which Maracci and other Romish writers have assailed the Koran; but we are somewhat astonished at the favour it has found with those who call themselves Unitarians, for it contains the most pointed condemnation of their tenets. We have not the reasons of either party, either for "extenuating" or "setting down aught in malice;" we have, therefore, limited ourselves to a plain statement of facts derived from original authorities. If the picture appears more favourable than some of our readers anticipated, we entreat them to remember that nothing but a large admixture of truth can give permanence to delusion, and that He, who in the darkness of Polytheism, "left not himself without witness," would not have abandoned the fairest portion of the earth for centuries to a system which was wholly impurity and demoralization. It may also open to us more cheering views of the future prospects of the world, to find in such an influential creed, the foundations of Christianity already laid; the great truths of the Gospel, like the reflection of sun-beams in a ruffled stream, glorious though disfigured, affording us grounds for hope, that the exertions of Christian societies to effect the moral and religious regeneration of the Eastern world, may be at no distant period crowned with success, and Europe and Asia become "one flock under one Shepherd *."

* See the Third Collect for Good Friday.

CHAPTER I.

MOHAMMEDAN TRADITIONS RESPECTING THE PERSON-
AGES WHO HAVE PRECEDED THEIR PROPHET IN
PREACHING THE TRUE FAITH.

THE religion taught by Mohammed is said, by its professors, to be described in the single word Islám, which signifies *resignation*; and as all the patriarchs and prophets recorded in holy writ, and all the religious reformers mentioned in Oriental tradition, uniformly inculcate obedience to the Divine will, the Mussulmans claim both classes as partisans of their faith. In no respect is the simplicity of the Bible more remarkable than in the abstinence of its authors from all physical theories; it merely records the facts of the creation, without assigning the modes in which Divine agency operated, or the connexion between the phenomena produced; even its civil history seems as little designed as its natural for the gratification of idle curiosity, or scientific speculation; its principal aim is to record one great and connected series of events, connecting the history of man's fall with the history of man's redemption; on all other topics, the information it contains is scanty and incidental. The most decisive mark of fabrication in any work written to imitate the Bible, or in any religious system designed to supersede that founded on Scripture, must be, of necessity, a collection of superfluous details, and futile attempts at explanation, such as we find in the Jewish Talmud, in the Koran, and in too many traditions sanctioned by the Romish church. Of such fabulous additions to the Scripture narrative, and ridiculous explanations of circumstances which ignorance supposed to be obscure, the tra-

ditions we are about to record almost exclusively consist, but the demerit of the invention must not be ascribed to Mohammed or his followers; they are, for the most part, borrowed from the Talmud, and the writings of the Jewish Rabbins.

The narrative of the Koran commences before the creation of the world; we are told that the celestial hierarchy was divided into classes, but the Islámite doctors are not so minute in their classification as either the Rabbins or the ancient Christian fathers. In the highest class, that of archangels, there were once five, but there are now only four individuals, Satan having forfeited his place by rebellion. The four chief angels, called *the Approximated*, because they stand close to the throne of the Omnipotent, are Gabriel, the chief ambassador of God; Michael, who presides over the elements; Azrael, who receives the souls of men when they are separated from their bodies; and Azraphel, the guardian of the trumpet that shall summon the quick and the dead on the day of judgment. Of these, Gabriel is the most respected by the Mohammedans, because he is supposed to have been the personal friend of their prophet; on the other hand, they regard Michael with some suspicion, asserting that he is devotedly attached to the Jews, and that he laboured to prevent the extension of the true faith to the Arabians. It is a singular instance of the readiness with which one nation adopts the popular legends of another, that the Oriental Jews have adopted this account of the angelic partialities; they always speak of Raphael as their friend and patron, but assert that Gabriel is opposed to the peculiar privileges which God bestowed upon his chosen people.

The fall of the angels is differently related in the Arabic traditions; but the most prevalent account is, that God,

after the creation of Adam, ordered all the angels to worship the new being, and that all but Eblis, or Satan, obeyed ; he was, in consequence, driven from heaven, and the faithful angels threw great stones at him, to accelerate his flight *. Another, but less popular version, is, that when the faith of Islâm was originally propounded to the celestial hierarchy, Eblis and a portion of his adherents refused to adopt it, and were punished with exile from heaven ; an opportunity for repentance was offered them, on the creation of Adam, but they resolved to persevere in their rebellion. Both versions of the fable are derived from Jewish sources.

The Mussulmans, in accordance with a superstition which, from the remotest ages, has prevailed in Asia, assert that there was a race intermediate between men and angels, which they call Gins or Genii. These beings, they say, inhabited the earth before time, when the Mosaic account commences, and consequently, they deem that the first chapter of Genesis records not a creation, but a regeneration of the terrestrial globe. To such an excess of absurdity have some writers carried their perverted imaginations, that they have written the history of the Gins or Deevs, and their successors the Peris, and have invented biographical anecdotes of the Præ-Adamite sovereigns of the earth. They inform us that the dynasty of the Genii lasted seven thousand years ; and that of the Peris, beings of an inferior but still a spiritual nature, two thousand years more. The sovereigns of both were, for the most part, named Solomon ; their number amounted to seventy-two. In riches, power, and magnificence, these monarchs surpassed every thing that the race of Adam has witnessed ; but the pride

* Hence the common Mohammedan prayer, " God preserve me from Satan, who was stoned."

with which such glories inspired them, filled their breasts with impiety, and their monstrous crimes at length provoked the wrath of the Omnipotent. Satan, or Eblis, was commissioned to destroy them; he exterminated the greater part of the perfidious race, and compelled the rest to seek refuge in the vast caves beneath the mighty Káf. Káf is the name of the mountain frame-work which supports the universe; it includes both the Caucasian chains, Taurus, Imaüs, and the most lofty peaks in Asia; its foundations rest on the mysterious Sakhrath, an enormous emerald, whose reflection gives an azure colour to the sky. It was the confidence with which his victory filled Satan, that induced him to refuse homage to Adam. When the Gins fled to Káf, their leader, Gian-Ibn-Gian, carried with him an enchanted shield, graven with seven mystic signs, the possession of which entitled him to the sovereignty of the universe. Adam, directed by an angel, pursued the rebellious Gin to the capital which he possessed beneath the earth, and wrested from him the magic buckler. After his death, the buckler remained concealed in the island of Serendib, or Ceylon, where it was discovered by Kaiomers, king of Persia, who became, in consequence, sovereign of the East. The successors of Kaiomers, sustained by the power of this spell, subdued, not only men, but the Genii and Giants of Káf; and, while they retained the shield, were lords of the material universe. No account is given of the manner in which it was lost. To the Persian narrative the Arabians add, that the Genii were subjected by Solomon, the son of David, and forced to aid in building his mighty structures, and that, at the period of Moham-med's mission, many of them embraced the creed of Islám, since which period they have ceased to hold communication with human beings.

To the Scriptural account of man's creation, the Mohammedan doctors, after the example of the Jewish Rabbins, have made many strange additions; such as that Adam was formed from seven different kinds of clay, whence arises the diversity of the human species; that he saw all his future posterity assembled under the form of ants in the valley of Nooman, and preached to them the doctrines of Islám; and that before his animation was complete, he attempted to stand up; but necessarily falling, he was forced to recognise his dependence on his Creator. Eve was produced from Adam's side, they say, after the expulsion of Satan from Paradise for refusing homage to the First Man; she was consequently unacquainted with the person of her adversary, who, aided by the serpent and the peacock, secretly returned to Eden, and persuaded her to eat the forbidden fruit. When our first parents were expelled from Paradise, which they suppose to have been placed in the seventh or lowest heaven, Adam fell in the island of Serendib, or Ceylon, near the mountain which still retains his name; but Eve on the coast of the Red Sea, not far from Mecca. During two hundred years they lived apart, ignorant of each other's fate, bewailing their forlorn condition, and bitterly repenting of their transgression. At length God took pity upon them, and directed Gabriel to bring them together near Mount Arafát (*recognition*) in Arabia. But this was not the only mark of the divine forgiveness and favour which Adam received; a ray of divine intelligence descended upon him after his posterity became numerous, the light of inspiration, which formed a glory round the head of all God's chosen messengers, beamed from his countenance, he became the first of prophets, and the first human preacher of Islám. The age of Adam was 960 years on this earth, but, in addition, he had previously

lived 500 years in Paradise. His body was interred near Mecca, but Noah took it with him into the ark, and after the subsiding of the deluge, it was carried to Jerusalem by Melchizedek.

The prophetic light next descended on the patriarch Seth, who added a book on the divine law to the ten which Adam had composed. Both in the Talmudic and Mohammedan traditions, this *Sepher Seth*, or book of Seth, is supposed to have survived the deluge, but the former declare that it is incorporated in the Pentateuch, the latter regard it as irrecoverably lost. Some of the Oriental Christians, who have adopted the Jewish fables, think that a copy or copies of it may be in existence. During the life of Seth, the depravity which finally provoked the deluge commenced; the Cainites, or Cahilites, as they are called by the Arabians, rejected the pure faith of Islám, and too many of Seth's posterity imitated the pernicious example.

The third of the prophets, and the greatest, according to the Arabians, that flourished in the antediluvian world, was Edris (*the student*), who, in the Old Testament, is named Enoch. He was sent to preach to the Cainites, but they rejected his doctrine, whereupon he waged war against them, and made them servants and slaves of the true believers. He is also said to have ordered the faithful to treat all future infidels in a similar manner; an invention too gratifying to the Saracenic conquerors not to have been instantly adopted. To Edris is attributed the invention of the pen, the needle, the sciences of astronomy and arithmetic, and the arts of magic and divination; his treatises are said to have been thirty in number, but of them only one, called emphatically the book of Enoch, still remains. The great authority attributed to this apocryphal work by

the Orientals, appears from its being quoted by the apostle Jude; an Ethiopic version of it has been recently discovered, and translated by the Rev. Dr. Laurence, Archbishop of Cashel.

In the days of Noah, the fourth of the antediluvian prophets, occurred the universal deluge; the Mohammedan account of this catastrophe differs from the Scriptural, and even from the Rabbinical: it declares that eighty believers were saved in the ark, and that Canaan, an infidel son or grandson of Noah, and also the patriarch's incredulous wife, Waila, perished in the waters. The origin of the first part of the fable is, that a town named Thamanin, which signifies eighty, was built near the foot of the mountain on which most of the Orientals believe the ark to have rested. The second part is obviously derived from the peculiar form of expression used by Noah, when denouncing vengeance upon Ham: "Cursed is Ham, the father of Canaan." From the Rabbins, the Arabians have taken the story, that all the evils in the world have been introduced by the posterity of Japheth, but that piety and virtue were preserved by the descendants of Shem. They add that Noah having risen early one morning to offer up his matin prayers, summoned his sons and grandsons to share in his devotions; Shem and his eldest son, Arphaxad, alone obeyed the call, and Noah prayed that they might be rewarded for their piety with some peculiar blessing. During his prayer it was revealed to him, that the gift of prophecy and apostleship should be hereditary in the family of Arphaxad, that his descendants should have the future sovereignty of the world, which should be successively possessed by the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, and the Arabians. In this, as in most of the traditions of Western Asia, we find the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Median monarchies regarded as successive Persian dynasties.

In the two next traditions we find the Mohammedans preserving some fragments of ancient Arabian history, and no longer borrowing from the Jews or Persians; though it is not unlikely that both the legends we are about to recount have been based on a corrupted narrative of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. However this may be, the history of the prophets Hûd and Sâleh, the heroes of these legends, appears to be purely of Arabic origin; and the attempt made by many commentators to identify the former with the patriarch Heber, rests on no better ground than mere conjecture, which has not even the merit of being plausible.

In the fifth generation after the flood, the tribe of the Adites in Arabia Felix was ruled by Shedâd, a monarch equally impious and powerful, who not only taught idolatry to his subjects, but arrogated to himself the honours of a Divinity. To procure these honours he planted a garden, to which he gave the name Irem, and stored it with everything that could gratify the taste or delight the senses. Hither he brought certain of his subjects, declaring that he would give them a foretaste of Paradise; and the Adites, intoxicated by the delights thus afforded them, worshipped Shedâd as a god. Their excessive wickedness at length provoked the Omnipotent to wrath, but before executing his vengeance on the perverse generation, he sent the prophet Hûd to preach the pure doctrines of Islâm, and exhort them to repentance. The Adites laughed the prophet to scorn; but when their land was afflicted by a drought of three years' continuance, with its attendant evils, famine and pestilence, they were filled with consternation. After long deliberation they resolved to send seventy ambassadors, under the guidance of Kail and Morthed, to supplicate for rain in the holy temple of Mecca, or, as some say, to a hill

of red sand near that city. The ambassadors were so hospitably entertained by Moâwiyah, king of Mecca, that they forgot the object of their mission; but their memory was awakened by some verses sung to them by a female minstrel. Roused from their lethargy, they prepared to execute their task, when Morthed proposed that they should first adopt the advice of Hûd, and not insult God by prayer whilst they continued enemies to his name. Kail resisted this proposal, and prevailed upon Moâwiyah to throw Morthed and his supporters into prison. The rest of the embassy proceeded to the appointed place, and Kail, in the name of the Adites, prayed for rain. He had scarcely concluded, when three clouds of different colours, white, red, and black, appeared above the horizon, and a divine voice pronounced, "Choose which you will." Kail chose the black cloud, which followed the deputation on its journey homewards. Nothing could exceed the joy of the Adites when they learned that their ambassadors were returning with the blessing of which they were so much in want; the monarch and all his subjects rushed from the city-gates to meet Kail and his company; they hailed the approaching cloud with frantic joy, but still the names of false idols were on their lips, and impiety in their hearts. The cloud at length drew near, but instead of being fraught with healthful showers, it was found to contain a pestilential wind that raged over the devoted city for seven days and seven nights, in which time all the Adites were destroyed, save those who had believed on the prophet Hûd. The city of Irem, says the tradition, still exists as a monument of divine vengeance, but God permits it rarely to be seen. In the reign of the first of the Omniade Khalifs (Moâwiyah), an Arab of the desert, named Calabar, entered the deserted city by accident, but, affrighted by its solitude, he retired, taking

with him a few stones as testimonies of his visit, which were subsequently found to be of immense value. At the present day, when the Arabs wish to describe anything as of very remote antiquity, they say it happened in the days of the Adites; and when they would portray the force of God's wrath, they quote this line from the poet Atthâr, "A single breath of his wrath destroyed a nation in an instant."

Notwithstanding the awful calamity which overwhelmed the Adites, the Thamudites, who inhabited Arabia Petræa, on the borders of Syria, became idolaters in the eighth generation after Noah, and God sent the prophet Sâleh to preach to them the doctrine of the Divine Unity. They demanded from Sâleh a miracle as a proof of his mission, and he commanded a rock to be rent asunder and a she-camel to come forth. His orders were obeyed; a solid rock opened, and the camel came into the midst of the Thamudites, and brought forth her young. But so far was this from producing any effect on the hearts of the impious, that they insulted and mocked Sâleh. A few, however, believed; but the great majority, weary of the prophet's appeals to the miraculous camel, and trusting to the security of their dwellings, which were excavations in the solid rock, slew the dam and her young by cutting their hamstrings. Immediately there was heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Ye shall all die." A dreadful earthquake followed, and all were destroyed, save those who had believed on Sâleh. The miserable remnant of the Thamudites, guided by their prophet, quitted their native country and settled near Mecca.

As Abraham was the common father of the Arabian and Jewish races, we must naturally suspect that the Mohammedans readily adopted many of the traditions, which the Rabbins have preserved, respecting their great pro-

genitor. It is not, however, always possible to trace the parentage of these legends, because the name of Abraham is celebrated in all the countries between the Indus and the Levant. He is regarded by the nations of Central and Western Asia as a great prophet and a powerful prince; some of the Persians identify him with Zerdusht (Zoroaster), and, like the Jews and Arabs, pretend that they derived from him their first written code of laws. The stories respecting him are as numerous as his fame is extensive; we shall, therefore, only select those to which allusion is made in the Koran.

Abraham, say the Arabians, was the son of Azar, and grandson of Terah, a statement, perhaps, not quite irreconcilable with the Scriptural narrative. Nimrod, who reigned in Babylon at the time of Abraham's birth, dreamed that he saw a star which gradually increased in brightness until its glory eclipsed that of the sun: he consulted the diviners for an exposition, and was informed that a child was about to be born, whose glory and greatness should eclipse his own. Upon this the tyrant ordered all the pregnant women in his dominions to be seized, and their male offspring to be destroyed. Adna, the wife of Azar, was enabled miraculously to conceal her condition; she brought forth and educated the child in secret. When he arrived at the age of fifteen months, by a new miracle he attained the stature and intelligence of fifteen years; some add that this was caused by the miraculous sustenance he received, for that, from the time of his birth, when he sucked one finger it yielded him exquisite milk, whilst another afforded him delicious honey. As his appearance removed all dread of danger, Azar brought his child home, and educated him in the Sabeian idolatry, which he professed himself, and which consisted in the worship of the celestial luminaries.

The worship of the starry host revolted a mind gifted with preternatural intelligence: Abraham resolved to offer his devotions only to the ruler of their multitude; and when he saw the planet Venus appear with superior brilliancy, he prepared to offer it adoration. But after a brief space he saw the planet setting, and exclaimed, "I like not gods that fade away." The moon next attracted his attention, but she, too, disappeared after a season; even the sun was found to run only an appointed course, and the youth felt persuaded that a Being more lasting than these must be the ruler of the firmament. He applied to his father for information, and was directed to worship the mighty Nimrod. Abraham requested to be shown this claimant of divine honours: he was brought to the court of the Sovereign, and beheld an old man horribly deformed. He felt at once convinced that such a person could not have created a world full of harmony and beauty, and, returning home, prayed for direction to the unknown God. His prayer was answered by a special revelation of the Divine Unity; the prophetic radiance beamed from his forehead, and he became a preacher of Islâm, like Enoch, Noah, and Sâleh.

Abraham's first care was to convert his father, who was the guardian of the Chaldean Temple, or, according to other accounts, the chief manufacturer of idols in Babylon. Taking advantage of Azar's absence, he broke all the idols to pieces with a hammer, and with an unconcerned air awaited his father's return. When Azar came back he viewed the ruins with astonishment, and demanded the occasion of such disorder. Abraham replied, that a woman having brought an offering of fine flour, the idols had quarrelled about it and pomelled each other to pieces. To point out the absurdity of the excuse would have been to confess the folly of his own creed; Azar, therefore, instead

of making any reply, accused his son of impiety before Nimrod. The tyrant ordered the young man to be precipitated into a fiery furnace; but God came to the succour of his servant—the fire lost its heat, the furnace became a garden of roses, and Abraham came forth unhurt by the conflagration.

Nimrod's impiety did not escape unpunished. God, to confound his pride, sent an insect which preyed upon his brain and never allowed him a moment's repose. He died in the most horrible agonies, leaving behind him a name which, like that of Nero in the western world, is applied to all tyrants and scourgers of the human race.

After his deliverance, Abraham was commanded by God to quit Babylon, and direct his course towards Palestine. The Mohammedans accuse the Jews of designedly falsifying this portion of the patriarch's history, for the purpose of exalting their progenitor, Isaac. According to the Arabian legend, it was Ishmael that Abraham was directed to sacrifice as a test of his faith, and hence they term him commonly "the offering." When Sarah and Hagar could no longer agree, they say that Abraham conducted Ishmael and his mother to the city of Mecca; and when they complained of the want of water an angel directed him to stamp upon the ground, and immediately the holy well, Zemzem, was opened. This well lies within the sacred enclosure of the Meccan Temple, and was venerated by the Arabians long before Mohammed was born. Abraham frequently visited Ishmael; by the direction of God he erected the Caaba, or sanctuary of Mecca; Ishmael collected the stones, and Abraham constructed the edifice. The stone is still shown in which he left the impression of his feet.

The hospitality of Abraham is to this hour celebrated

in the East ; one anecdote will serve as a specimen of the many legends related respecting his charity. When a famine devastated Palestine, Abraham distributed corn to the poor until his own stores were quite exhausted ; he sent for a fresh supply to a friend in Egypt, but the famine had extended thither, and the messengers were refused. Unwilling to expose themselves to ridicule by returning with empty sacks, they loaded their beasts with sand, which was miraculously changed into corn when they arrived in the presence of Abraham. It would be tedious to give further specimens of the romance which has been founded on the life of the patriarch as recorded in Scripture ; suffice it to quote what Mohammed says in the Koran : “ Abraham was neither Jew nor Christian, but an orthodox believer, and a Mussulman.”

After the death of Abraham the prophetic illumination, say the Arabs, descended on two persons, Ishmael and Isaac, at the same time ; Ishmael they believe to have been the greater prophet, but the Jews they say have falsely attributed his most remarkable actions to Isaac. Their respect for Ishmael extends to Hagar, whom they call emphatically, “ The Mother,” and reckon among the prophetesses.

From Isaac the prophetic light passed to Jacob, and was, by him, transmitted to Joseph, whose interesting history the Oriental poets and romancers have disfigured with many strange fictions. They tell us that the name of Potiphar’s wife was Zuleikha, and that her passion for Joseph was so notorious as to create great scandal in the capital of Egypt ; the ladies of the court declaimed against Zuleikha for falling in love with a slave, and accused her of unworthy weakness. Zuleikha hearing of these reports, invited the ladies to a feast of fruit, and introduced Joseph

in the midst of the banquet; so dazzled were they with his extraordinary beauty, that they cut their fingers instead of the pomegranates. After this Zuleikha, either enraged by Joseph's persevering virtue, or really anxious to overcome her depraved passions, entreated her husband Kitfir or Potiphar, to confine him until time and reason had restored the serenity of her mind. The legend goes on, in accordance with Scripture, to mention the imprisonment of the Egyptian Pharaoh's chief butler and baker, the interpretation of their dreams by Joseph, the fulfilment of his predictions, his being called to interpret the King's dream, and his appointment to the office of Vizier; it adds that the name of this Pharaoh or Sovereign, was Riyán, the son of Walíd, a descendant of 'Amalek. One tradition asserts that Joseph, after the death of Potiphar, was united to Zuleikha; but most authors, in nearer accordance with Scripture, say that he married Asunah, the daughter of the Kohen, or pontiff of the great temple of Ain or On, which the Greeks named Heliopolis (*the City of the Sun*). Joseph, it is added, introduced many of the Chaldean arts, previously unknown, into Egypt; he taught them how to drain marshes, and thus converted a pestilential tract into a fertile province; he introduced the science of geometry, in order that proprietors should know the limits of their estates when the inundation of the Nile had subsided; to him is attributed the erection of the Mekias or Nilometer, at Memphis, and the formation of the first canal for draining off the superfluous waters of the Nile.

A great many Mohammedan writers, especially the Persians, regard the story of Joseph and Zuleikha as an allegorical emblem of the spiritual love between God and the soul; just as the fable of Cupid and Psyche was applied by the later Platonists to the same mystical purposes.

After having been long hidden, the prophetic light descended on Shōaib, who is called in the Bible Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses. He was sent to preach the doctrines of Islām to the Midianites, who were sunk in idolatry and iniquity; they used false weights and measures; and they sent forth bands of robbers to plunder the caravans of pilgrims, who, at this early age, went to worship at Mecca. Shōaib proved the truth of his mission by many signal miracles, of which only one is recorded. He was about to ascend a mountain for the purpose of offering up prayer, but the mountain sunk down like a camel to receive its rider, and thus saved him the toil of ascent. When the Midianites rejected the admonitions of Shōaib, God sent the angel Gabriel, whose voice of thunder caused an earthquake, in which all were destroyed, save those who had been converted by the preaching of the prophet. Soon after this event, Moses came to seek refuge in Midian.

For the numerous fables with which the Mohammedans have disfigured the Scriptural account of Moses, they are chiefly indebted to their old friends the Talmudists and Rabbins. The whole of these legends would fill a volume; we shall, therefore, select only a few of the most remarkable. He was born in the reign of Pharaoh Walid, a descendant in the fifth generation from the Walid who had patronised Joseph. Masâb, the preceding monarch, had arrived at the extreme of old age without having a child; at length a son was announced to him by an extraordinary prodigy. He beheld a cow calve, and heard her at the same time say, "O Masâb, be not grieved, for thou shalt have a wicked son, who shall be at length cast into hell." Accordingly, soon after, his wife brought forth Walid, who proved an impious tyrant. Walid married Assiah, the niece of a Jewish prince named Amram; but when he

began to persecute the chosen people of God, Nagiah, (called in Scripture Jochebed,) the wife of Amram, did not trust to her connexion with the royal family, but hid the infant Moses in an oven. His sister, Miriam, not knowing this circumstance, kindled a large fire in the oven, but the infant was miraculously saved, and taken out unhurt. Notwithstanding this providential preservation, his mother, alarmed by the diligent search after the Hebrew males, made an ark of papyrus-leaves, which she covered with bitumen and lined with cotton, and having laid the boy in it, committed him to the river. The stream carried the ark through a canal into a fish-pond in Walíd's garden, where the Pharaoh was then sitting with his queen Assiah. Delighted by the beauty of the child, the royal pair resolved to educate him as their son, and summoned their attendants to provide a nurse. Several nurses were brought, but the child refused to take the breast of any, until his sister Miriam proposed to send for Nagiah, and thus Moses was restored to the care of his mother. Walíd one day took up the child in his arms, and began to fondle him, but Moses pulled the Pharaoh so roughly by the beard, that in his rage he ordered him to be put to death. Assiah, however, interfered, declaring that he was still an infant, who would not know a ruby from a piece of burning coal. Walíd ordered the experiment to be tried; both were placed before him, and Moses thrusting the red-hot coal into his mouth, burned his tongue so severely, that he had ever afterwards an impediment in his speech.

Moses having slain an Egyptian, for ill-treating an Israelite, was thrown into prison, and condemned to death; when brought out to be beheaded, his neck became miraculously as hard as ivory, and the sword rebounding from it, slew the executioner. In the confusion occasioned by

this surprising event, Moses made his escape, and fled into the land of Midian.

Moses, on his arrival in Midian, acquired the affection of Zipporah, the daughter of Shöaib, by rescuing her from the insolence of some shepherds, and removing a stone from the mouth of a well, which seven men could not have stirred. Shöaib took the exile into his service, and gave him, instead of a shepherd's crook, the prophetic rod, which had belonged to Adam, and had been transmitted down to Shöaib through the hands of the successive prophets. It was with this rod that Moses subsequently worked so many miracles. After the lapse of ten years, God appeared to Moses in Sinai, appointed him a preacher of Islâm, invested him with supernatural powers, and sent him as a missionary to the court of Egypt. The prophetic radiance then kindled on his brow, though some say that he had possessed it from infancy, and that the sight of it had induced the midwives to spare him, and Walíd to adopt him as a son.

When Moses had declared his mission to Walíd, the Pharaoh demanded that he should authenticate it by a miracle; whereupon the prophet, who was swarthy, put his hand into his bosom, and drew it forth of a dazzling whiteness. Finding that this produced no impression upon the spectators, he threw his rod upon the ground, which suddenly changed into an enormous dragon, covered with flaky hair; his jaws were forty yards asunder, and when one rested on the ground, the other was lifted above the roof of the palace. The terrified Pharaoh entreated Moses to remove the monster, but when his request was granted, he peremptorily refused obedience to the divine command.

A summons was now sent to the Egyptian magicians, requiring them to come and rival the feats of Moses; they provided themselves with thick ropes and flexible pieces of

wood, to which, by mechanical means, they gave a motion like that of serpents; but when they displayed their trick in the royal presence, the dragon into which the rod of Moses was changed, swallowed all their rods and cords; it then rushed towards the spectators, and filled the multitude with such terror, that many perished in the tumult; but Moses stretching forth his hand, it became again a rod. The magicians were covered with confusion, and some of them became converts; these the Pharaoh ordered to be crucified.

Two of the magicians, named Sadûr and Ghadûr, had gone to seek advice at the tomb of their father before obeying the royal summons. At their invocation, a voice came from the sepulchre, directing them to observe whether the rod remained a serpent while its owners slept, for that human enchantments only had effect while the enchanter was awake. They found that when Moses and Aaron went to rest, the rod became a serpent to guard them. Sadûr and Ghadûr were, therefore, the first to declare their conversion, and also the first to suffer martyrdom. When sentence was pronounced, they addressed the tyrant in these words, "We shall certainly return unto the LORD in the next life, for thou takest vengeance upon us because we have believed in the signs of our LORD, when they have come unto us." Then looking up to heaven, they added, "O LORD, pour on us patience, and cause us to die Moslems."

The Pharaoh then, by the advice of his minister Haman, ordered a lofty tower to be erected, in the construction of which not less than fifty thousand men were employed. When it was carried to such a dizzy height that the workmen could no longer bear to stand upon it, the king ascended it, hurled a javelin towards the sky, which came back

covered with blood. Upon this he impiously boasted that he had slain the God of Moses, but that night the angel Gabriel overthrew the tower by a blow of his wing, a part of which falling on the king's army, slew a million of men.

The history of the ten plagues of Egypt, the passage of the Red Sea, and the giving of the law from Mount Sinai, is nearly the same in the Scriptures and the Arabian traditions; but their account of the Golden Calf forms a curious legend. The Mohammedans say that the person who cast this calf was not Aaron but Sâmeri, a Jewish prince, to whom was intrusted the guardianship of the ornaments and jewels which had been borrowed from the Egyptians. In order to carry this treasure more conveniently, he resolved to melt it into one mass, and in the furnace, it, without any design of his, assumed the form of a calf. The Israelites, accustomed to the Egyptian idolatry, paid homage to this image, and threw into its mouth some of the dust from the print of the horse's foot-steps on which Gabriel rode at the head of their host. But the most interesting of the traditions respecting Moses, is that on which Parnell has founded his well-known poem *The Hermit*, and which we believe to be a native Arabian legend. Moses, once preaching to the people, displayed so much eloquence, that his audience inquired whether a man existed wiser than himself, to which he replied in the negative. God rebuked him in a vision, and informed him that his servant Kedher was more intelligent, and that he would find him at a place where two seas met, and where a fish, that he was directed to carry in a basket, should disappear. Accompanied by his servant Joshua, Moses travelled to a great distance, and at length reached a spot where the seas of Greece and Persia met! Here the fish disappeared suddenly, and soon after they met Kedher. Moses requested to be

received as his disciple; Kedher replied, "Verily, thou canst not bear with me, for how canst thou patiently suffer those things, the knowledge of which thou dost not comprehend?" Moses promised implicit obedience, and was commanded not to inquire the meaning of anything he saw, until Kedher explained it voluntarily. To this Moses agreed, and both set out upon a journey together. As they passed by the sea-shore they saw a ship, into which Kedher ascending, struck out two of her planks with an axe. Moses inquired the cause, but being reproached for a breach of contract, he apologized, and they continued their course. Soon after they met a beautiful youth, whom Kedher slew. Moses, horror-struck, remonstrated against the crime, but being again reminded of his agreement, he was forced to be silent. After this they wandered, until, weary and hungry, they approached the city of Tarsus; here they asked for food and shelter, but the inhabitants refused to receive them. In this city there was a wall ready to fall down, but Kedher set it upright by merely stroking it with his hand. Upon this, Moses desiring an explanation, Kedher declared that they should part, but first condescended to explain his enigmatical conduct. The ship belonged to ten poor brethren, five of whom were broken down with age, and were supported by the labour of the other five; the king of the country had resolved to seize all the vessels in his dominions, and this was only rescued from his clutches by being rendered for a time unserviceable. The boy was the unbelieving son of believing parents, who would have been perverted had he continued to live, but now God had resolved to supply his place with a daughter, who should both be a prophetess herself, and the mother of a prophet that should convert a nation. Finally, the wall concealed a treasure belonging to orphans, who were as yet unable to

make use of it; the prophet had, therefore, secured the wall for its preservation; and in all his actions he had been influenced, not by his own will, but by God's immediate directions. Moses heard the explanation with submission, and returned to the camp of the Israelites with a more modest opinion of his own abilities.

Of Kedher, we are told that he had been permitted to drink the waters of the fountain of life, and thus became immortal, as his name, which signifies *verdant* or *blooming*, intimates. It is added that he was the same as Phineas, Elijah, and St. George, and that he will again appear to preach the doctrines of Islám.

Job is less celebrated by the Arabians than might have been expected. The commentators on the Koran tell us that he was of the race of Esau, and was married to Rhamat, the grand-daughter of Joseph. When Satan afflicted him, she at first attended him very affectionately, though the loathsome disease with which he was struck, drove away his friends and servants. One day the devil appeared to her, reminded her of her former prosperity, and offered to restore all she had lost, if she would fall down and worship him. Rhamat entreated her husband to consent, but he was so enraged at the proposal, that he swore to punish her with a hundred stripes if he ever regained his health. Some time after this, he uttered the prayer which the Mohammedans of the present day always use when in distress; "Verily, evil hath afflicted me, but Thou art the most merciful of those who show mercy." God, in answer to this supplication, sent the angel Gabriel, who stamped with his foot, and a fountain sprung up, of which, when Job had tasted, he was instantly healed. There is a village in Arabia, where the well of which this fable is told, is still shown, and near it may be seen petrifications of worms with

which they say the patriarch was afflicted. God finally restored to Job double of what he had lost, and gave both to him and his wife the beauty and strength of youth. To fulfil his oath, he was directed to strike his wife once with a palm-branch, having a hundred leaves.

After Job, the prophetic light was long obscured, but at length it appeared on the head of David. Many of the legends respecting this sovereign are taken from the Rabbins, but there are others that seem peculiar to the Arabians. It is said that his melody was so powerful as to enchant the birds and beasts ; even inanimate nature joined him when in his psalms he celebrated the praises of the Almighty. When he sinned, he passed forty days in penitence, and shed such abundance of tears, that the plants and herbs grew to a large size from being so plentifully watered. His humility was one of his most distinguishing characteristics ; in the midst of his magnificent court, he wore only the simple vestment of white wool used by the prophets ; and though his revenues were immense, he supported himself by the labour of his own hands, working as an armourer, and forging coats of mail. Hence he is at this day regarded as the patron of those who work in iron, by the Oriental nations.

But the fame of David is eclipsed by that of his son Solomon, respecting whose magnificence, power, and wisdom, countless legends are narrated. They say that his empire extended over the Eastern and Western worlds ; that not only men, but angels, dæmons, genii, the birds, the beasts, and universal nature, were subjected to his authority. His piety was as illustrious as his greatness ; he had a thousand fleet steeds, each of inestimable price. One day he remained absorbed in the contemplation of their beauty, until the hour of prayer had elapsed, when, as an atonement

for his negligence, he ordered the entire stud to be sacrificed. God, as a reward, gave him power over the winds ; he had a carpet of immense size prepared, capable of transporting all his forces ; in the centre stood his throne, his soldiers were ranged on his right hand, and the spirits on his left. When all was ready, the winds took up the carpet, and wafted it whithersoever the king pleased. An army of birds accompanied him, and their extended wings sheltered all on the carpet from the sun and rain. In this manner he crossed in safety lofty mountains, rapid rivers, the sands of the Arabian desert, and the waters of the Indian Ocean, and forced all the nations of the earth to make profession of Islám.

When Solomon administered justice, twelve thousand patriarchs and prophets sat at his right hand on golden thrones, while on his left were twelve thousand sages and doctors of the law, seated on thrones of silver. The magnificence of his own royal seat was beyond description, it blazed with diamonds and precious stones ; while birds of the most gorgeous plumage, hovering over it, formed an awning, to which the world has never seen a parallel.

Before the temple of Jerusalem was completed, Solomon resolved to visit Mecca. When he was about to march his army through a valley in Syria, he heard an ant say unto its companions, "O ye ants, enter ye into your habitations, lest Solomon and his army tread you under foot, and perceive it not." Instead of being elated by finding his fame celebrated even by insects, he piously offered God the glory, saying, "O Lord, excite me that I may be thankful for thy favour, wherewith thou hast favoured me and my parents ; and that I may do that which is right, and well-pleasing unto thee ; and introduce me, through thy mercy, into paradise among thy servants."

When he had completed his pilgrimage, he missed the lapwing from its place in the canopy of birds, and threatened to destroy her, unless she had a good excuse for her absence. The lapwing soon returned, and declared that she had gone to explore the country of Sheba, which the monarch had never visited. She declared that it was a rich, fertile, and populous district, governed by a queen named Balkis, who possessed a throne of surpassing beauty; but the inhabitants were sunk in gross idolatry, and duped by the delusions of Satan. Upon hearing this intelligence, Solomon commanded the bird to return with a summons to Balkis, couched in the following terms: "From the servant of God, Solomon, the son of David, unto Balkis queen of Sheba. In the name of the most merciful God. Peace be on those who follow the true direction. Rise not up against me, but come and surrender yourselves unto me." The letter was perfumed with musk, and sealed with the royal signet.

The alarmed queen sent ambassadors with rich gifts, to supplicate the king's favour; but, her presents being rejected, she resolved to wait on him in person. Before her departure she secured her throne in a strong castle, barred and bolted, and watched by a faithful guard; but Solomon, anxious to make trial of her intelligence, ordered one of those terrific genii, the Ifrites, to bring it to him, and "before the eye could wink," his precept was obeyed. The king then ordered it to be altered and disguised, but Balkis having recognised it without difficulty, he felt persuaded that she was a woman of intelligence. Balkis tried a thousand arts to prove the extent of Solomon's wisdom, but finding that he solved all difficulties, she acknowledged him as a prophet, and became a convert to Islám. Solomon made her one of his wives, and from this marriage the present

kings of Abyssinia and the ancient line of Georgian monarchs claim to be descended.

Among the precious possessions of Solomon, there was one, said to be still in existence, the golden table which he gave to the temple at Jerusalem. The legend says, that after the destruction of Jerusalem it was carried to Spain, where it remained until the conquest of that country by the Moors; they sent it to Damascus, whence it was removed to Mecca. Some authors have supposed that this may have been "the table of shew-bread," which Titus brought to Rome, and displayed in his triumphal procession; but before investigating the story, it would be necessary to prove that any such monument exists in Mecca, a matter about which we entertain considerable doubt.

Solomon possessed also a magical buckler, a flaming sword, and an impenetrable cuirass, but none of these were so important as his signet-ring, graven with spells of such potency, that it enabled him to command the genii, the dæmons, and even the Ifrites, the most formidable beings in the world of spirits. But this ring was the cause of the greatest misery that he ever endured, having fallen into the power of an evil spirit, under the following circumstances.

After Solomon had captured Sidon, and slain its monarch, he took to wife Jeráda, the daughter of the late king; she soon became his favourite wife, and he readily exerted himself to gratify her every inclination. Finding that she ceased not to lament the loss of her father, he ordered the genii to prepare an image so like him, that, but for the absence of speech and motion, she might have supposed that it was her father restored to life. Jeráda and her attendants began to pay divine honours to this image; but Asaph, the faithful vizier of Solomon, having dis-

covered the crime, revealed it to his master. The king punished the women severely, and went into the desert, to atone, by penitence, for the guilt of having had a graven image in his house. His negligence, however, was not permitted to pass unpunished; when he went to bathe, he took off his signet-ring, which an Ifrite, named Sakhar, was permitted to seize. By virtue of the spell, he assumed the shape of Solomon, and changed him into a different form. During forty days, Sakhar retained the throne, the same space of time that Jeráda's worship of the image lasted, while the real monarch, so altered as not to be recognised, begged his bread from door to door. At the end of this time, Sakhar dropped the ring into the sea; it was swallowed by a fish, which being taken and given to Solomon, he found the ring in its belly. Having by this means recovered his kingdom, Solomon took Sakhar, and tying a great stone round his neck, threw him into the lake of Tiberias.

Solomon's writings were very voluminous; he treated of the whole circle of the sciences, but his works on astrology and magic were the most celebrated. The tradition that Solomon wrote on these subjects is of very remote antiquity; Josephus tells us, that in the reign of Hezekiah, several books on magic, bearing the name of Solomon, were circulated, which that pious monarch ordered to be destroyed, but some copies were concealed by their possessors. The Korán says, that these works were not written by *Solomon*, but by certain dæmons in his name.

It was by the aid of the Genii that Solomon erected the stupendous edifices which in Eastern traditions have conferred such glory on his name: the city of Baalbec; the palaces and castles with which his kingdom was adorned and

strengthened; the statues and images which moved like living creatures at his command. Greater than them all was the Temple, which was not completed at the time of his death, and would have remained unfinished, had not God enabled him to disguise his decease from the turbulent spirits. Solomon, they say, died while leaning on his staff, offering up prayers in the great court of the Temple. During an entire year his body remained in this position without exhibiting the least symptom of decay; and the Genii, supposing him to be alive, continued their work, until the edifice was finished. God then sent a worm, which gnawed through the staff, and the corpse falling to the earth first showed that the king was dead. The Genii were indignant when they discovered the artifice by which they had been kept for twelve months in slavish toil.

The fame of Solomon is shared in some degree by his vizier Asaph, said to be the author of the psalms inscribed with his name; he was, according to the Orientals, a perfect model of a faithful minister. It was he that negotiated the treaty with the queen of Sheba, and, when Solomon lost his ring, saved the state from ruin.

The rival of Solomon in wisdom was Lokman, whom the Arabians believe to have been originally a slave, but to have been raised by his merits to the rank of one of David's councillors; as no mention of him is made in the Bible or the Talmud, the legends respecting him are probably founded on native Arabic, or perhaps Indian traditions. His person was deformed, his complexion swarthy, his limbs distorted from his birth; but Providence atoned for these deficiencies, by giving him wisdom and eloquence; many believe him to have been a prophet, but all confess him to have been remarkable as a sage. The apologues which he

wrote, and which are commonly called in Europe the Fables of Pilpay*, are regarded as treasures of wisdom throughout the East. He obtained his liberty on the following occasion: his master having given him a bitter melon, he instantly ate it, and when asked how he could eat so nauseous a fruit? replied, that he ought for once to accept a bitter fruit from the hand which had so often bestowed upon him favours.

One day, while Lokman slept, angels sent by God appeared to him, and announced to him that he should be appointed monarch of the universe. He replied, "If such be God's good pleasure, I shall readily submit; but I should rather remain as I am." In recompense of his humility, he was invested with intelligence which raised him above all the monarchs of the earth; and God said to him, "Be thou thankful unto God; for whosoever is thankful, shall be thankful to the advantage of his own soul; and if any shall be unthankful, verily God is self-sufficient, and worthy to be praised."

Being asked how he had become so wise and prudent? Lokman replied, "By being always faithful to truth, keeping my word inviolable, and never meddling in matters with which I had no concern." To another person who asked the same question, he replied; "By following the example of the blind, who never put out their foot until they have tried the place on which they are going to tread." When it was demanded, who taught him virtue, he replied, "The wicked; for they have inspired me with a horror of vice." A monarch with whom he lived on terms of familiarity, lost a beloved daughter, and was overwhelmed with sorrow. "I will restore your daughter to life," said Lokman, "if

* These fables are unquestionably of Indian origin.—*Schlegel*.

you will inscribe on her tomb the names of three persons who have never wept." The monarch inquired for such, but could find none, and was comforted. Such are the anecdotes related of Lokman, whose name is still used as a proverb for wisdom in the East.

We have already mentioned Kedher, whom the Arabians believe to be the same as Elijah: they say that he is the destined precursor of the Messiah, and will announce the second advent of Jesus, to judge both the quick and the dead. Jonah is almost the only other prophet of the Old Testament honoured by the Arabians. They ascribe to him the following prayer, when he was in the belly of the whale; it is one which the Mohammedans of the present day frequently use in seasons of affliction:—"There is no God beside thee; praise be unto thee! Verily, I have been one of the unjust!"

It will astonish some of our readers to find Alexander the Great, or, as the Orientals call him, Iskander Sultan of Roum, reckoned among the prophets and preachers of Islám; but the Mohammedans are fully persuaded that he attempted the conquest of the world, with no other design than to spread the knowledge of the Divine Unity, and extirpate idolatry. His biography has formed the subject of many treatises, more or less romantic; but of the adventures attributed to him it would be impossible, in our limited space, to give even an outline. The belief that Alexander was a Moslem probably arose from his having persecuted the worshippers of fire in Persia; the traditions of the Ghebirs or Parsees represent him as a cruel tyrant, animated by bitter hatred of their religion*; and as in this respect he shared the feelings of Mohammed, it was presumed that

* See the *Zend-Avesta*, vol. ii., p. 336.

the hostility of both to the Ghebirs arose from the same cause. His empire, they tell us, extended over all Europe and Asia; China and Arabia were subject to his sceptre. As a specimen of the religious opinions they attribute to Alexander, we shall copy the letter of summons, which Mirkhond asserts was sent by the Macedonian conqueror to Foor (Porus), King of Hindustán:—

“Let it be known to the sovereign of Hindustán, that the Supreme and Holy King of kings has spread open before mine eyes the gates leading to the means of the protection of my subjects. He has also placed within the grasp of my will, and the hand of my authority, power to relax or curb the reins of administration in temporal and spiritual concerns, and has delivered over to our auspicious grace and excellent custody, the keys of the investiture of universal dominion, and the treasures of sovereign power; the exalting our happy ascendancy beyond the pinnacle of the celestial sphere and the starry firmament. Through His decrees, the refractory chieftains of the world have put the halter of obedience round their necks; and there has been conferred on us supreme power over the infidel, the turbulent, the rebellious, and the wicked. We, therefore, now exhort thee to worship the Creator of the universe, the nourisher of men and angels; and we prohibit thee from adoring any but Him. May His benefits be celebrated, and His blessings continued! We acknowledge none, save the only God, to be worthy of adoration; we recognise none but Him as entitled to our worship. May His attributes be exalted, and His blessings be lauded! Therefore now attend to our counsel with the ear of compliance, and send to us the idols which have been hitherto the object of thy adoration, in whose service and temples thou hast wasted and consumed thy life and treasures. In addition to this,

engage to pay us contributions and tribute ; but shouldst thou refuse compliance, I swear by the God whom I worship, to kindle the fire of wrath, with which I shall consume alike the moist and the dry in thy realms. I will exert my utmost power to extirpate thy family, neither will I omit the least particular in laying waste thy cities. Listen to our words, and deviate not from the path of rectitude. Look on thy pardon as great gain, and let no imaginary benefit be put in competition with that."

We shall add a few anecdotes illustrative of the character attributed to Alexander by the Orientals. Being asked, "Among all the objects attained by your power, from which do you receive most delight?" He replied, "From increasing the power and dignity of any one who has rendered me good service." Two of his courtiers, who entertained a violent animosity against each other, entreated that he would, in person, decide between them the matter in dispute. He answered, "My decision would certainly gratify the one and give pain to the other ; but if you tread the path of good faith and the road of rectitude, it will render you both acceptable to God, and benevolent." He was one day asked, "Why do you show greater respect and reverence to your instructor than you do to your father?" He replied, "From my tutor I obtain life eternal, and from my father a perishable existence." Knowing that he was subject to violent fits of passion, he said to his courtiers, "Approach not the king when he is angry ; if the sea is formidable when calm, how much more dreadful must it be when agitated by a tempest?" One of his officers was condemned by the military council for a gross act of disobedience : Alexander pardoned him, saying, "I love clemency more than vengeance." Being asked how he had accomplished such great things in a little space, he replied, "By making

friends of my enemies, and by treating my friends so well that they never wish to remove from me*."

We have seen that the Arabian legends respecting the principal persons recorded in the Old Testament, have been borrowed from the Talmud and the Rabbinical traditions rather than from the Holy Scriptures. In the same way we shall find that their account of our Saviour and his apostles is derived from the false Gospels, the legends adopted by the ignorant, and the corrupt notions of heresiarchs, rather than the New Testament. Zacharias and his son, John the Baptist, are persons for whom they show a great respect; but they confound the former with the son of Barachias, whom the Jews slew for reproving too severely their national guilt. To the Scriptural account of John the Baptist's murder they add, that his blood continued welling up like a fountain, until Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. Some of the commentators say that it was Bakhtnash (Nebuchadnezzar), and others, Gudarz (Antiochus Epiphanes), who avenged the Baptist's death. They say, that when the conqueror entered the temple, he beheld the blood bubbling up under the great altar, and demanded the cause of the phenomenon? They replied, that it was the blood of a sacrifice which God had not accepted. He replied that they had not told him the truth, and ordered a thousand of them to be slain. The blood not ceasing, he again interrogated the Jews, who confessed that it was the blood of John: upon this the victor said, "Thus hath your LORD taken vengeance upon you:" then lifting up his eyes to heaven he exclaimed, "O John, my LORD and thy LORD knoweth what hath befallen this people for thy sake; wherefore let thy blood stop, by God's permission, lest I leave not one of them

* See Appendix, No. I.

alive." Upon this the blood stopped, and the victor gave orders that the massacre should cease. This specimen may show that the Arabian traditions frequently pay little respect to chronology or historical consistency*.

We have already mentioned that the Mohammedans believe the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Miraculous Conception of our Saviour. The Annunciation is thus related in the Koran: "When the angels said, O Mary, verily God sendeth thee good tidings, that thou shalt bear THE WORD proceeding from Himself; his name shall be CHRIST JESUS, the son of Mary, honourable in this world and in the world to come, and one of those who approach near to the presence of God; and he shall speak unto men in the cradle, and when he is grown up, he shall be one of the righteous: she answered, 'Lord, how shall I have a son, seeing that I know not a man?' The angel said, 'Lo, God createth that which he pleaseth; when he decreeth a thing, he only saith unto it, BE, and it is.'" And again, "Verily, Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, is the apostle of God and his Word, which he conveyed to Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from Him." The Mohammedans attribute to Christ not only the miracles recorded in the Gospel, but those childish prodigies recorded in the apocryphal New Testament. And they make so near an approach to acknowledging his divinity, that a Persian poet addresses him in strains not unsuited to a Christian hymn. The following imperfect translation will enable the reader to form some estimate of the respect paid by the Mussulmans to the name of Jesus:—

When cankering care and grief's fell dart
Together agonize the heart,

* See Appendix, No. I.

Nought can a remedy afford,
O Jesus, but thy gracious word !

Though moral death the soul invade,
And every power be prostrate laid,
New strength thy potent word can give,
And bid the sinking spirit live.

If man's weak mind itself extend,
God's mysteries to comprehend,
Its light by thee alone is given,
By thee its strength to soar to heaven.

The Mohammedans have adopted a strange opinion, first broached by the heresiarch Basilides in the very beginning of Christianity, that Jesus was not really crucified, but that God changed Judas into his likeness, by which not only the Jews, but even the Virgin Mary and the Apostles, were deceived *. They add that he remained on earth forty days longer, for the purpose of consoling his faithful followers, by revealing to them his escape from the malice of his persecutors. They believe, however, in the reality of the Ascension, and that he will again return in glory, slay Antichrist, unite the Christian and Mohammedan creeds, and establish the true faith throughout the world.

As a consequence of their respect for our Lord, the Mussulmans show great respect for the Virgin Mary, whom, according to the Hebrew idiom, they name Miriam. They assert that she was born free from the stain of original sin, an opinion which they hold in common with a large portion of the Roman Catholics; that she was vowed to the service

* The same opinion was entertained by the Cerinthian and Carpocratian heretics: they varied in their account of the person crucified: some said it was Simon the Cyrenian; others, one of the disciples.

of God by her mother, Saint Anne, before her birth, and that she was presented as a living offering to God in the temple. There is a singular confusion in the Korán between Miriam, the sister of Moses, and the Virgin Mary: It is scarcely possible that Mohammed could have fallen into the gross error of identifying them, and yet the explanations given of the passage in which she is directly called the sister of Aaron, are anything but satisfactory.

The Mohammedans express great reverence for all the apostles, except St. Paul, whom they accuse of having corrupted the pure doctrines of Islám, taught by Jesus. With a singular disregard of places, persons, and times, they represent St. Paul as holding a council with the founders of the heresies of the third and fourth centuries, and forming with them the present Christian creed.

Though the Mussulmans assert that no prophet came after Jesus Christ until Mohammed, and call the period that intervened "The Interval," they believe that there appeared in that time several saints and holy persons whom they are bound to reverence. Of these, the most remarkable are St. George, the Seven Sleepers, and the Martyrs of the Pit. St. George, they assure us, was a Christian soldier, a native of Mosúl, on the Tigris, in Mesopotamia; exposed to persecutions, he three times suffered martyrdom, and was as often raised again from the dead. He worked many miracles, and then disappeared from human sight. He is supposed to be the same as Kedher or Elijah, and it is thought that he will again appear in the world to herald the second advent of Christ.

The Seven Sleepers are celebrated over the East, both by Christians and Mohammedans; their legend has found favour even with some Romish divines, for Father Maracci calls Hottinger, "a monster of impiety, and the very scum

of heresy," because he treats it as apocryphal. It is, however, but justice to add that Baronius, in his martyrology, regards the account as a fable. The legend is related with many variations, but the following account is that which has been most generally received. In the reign of the Emperor Decius, there were seven Christian youths of noble birth at Ephesus, who fled from that city on account of the idolatry of its inhabitants. As a reward for their piety God protected them from the general persecution then about to burst forth, and directed them to seek refuge in a cave, situated in the valley of Rakim. As they proceeded towards this place of refuge, they were followed by their dog Katmir, and attempted to drive him back, but God gave the animal the power of speech, and he said, "I love those who love God, therefore go to sleep, and I will guard you." When the young men entered the cave, God caused a deep sleep to fall upon them, which lasted more than two hundred years. During all this time Divine Providence watched over them; the light of the sun was turned away from their cave; their dog, an ever watchful guardian, set at the entrance with his fore-paws extended; a divine terror fell on all who approached the place, and the seven youths were taught to turn in their sleep, that they might not be injured by remaining too long on one side. When they were permitted to awake, supposing that they had only slept part of a day, they deputed one of their number to go into the city and purchase provisions; when he offered some antiquated coin in payment, it was imagined that he had found a treasure, and he was brought before the sovereign. When the news of the prodigy spread abroad, both prince and people hastened to the cave; the seven youths related their story, after which God ordained that they should die. The prince ordered that they should be buried in the valley,

and a chapel erected over their tomb. The Mussulmans regard the Seven Sleepers as personages of great importance, ranking next to the prophets; they have equal reverence for the dog: they write his name as a talisman on their letters, they believe him to be one of the five animals that will be admitted into Paradise*, and their proverbial sarcasm on a miser, is, that he would not throw a bone to the dog of the Seven Sleepers.

The Martyrs of the Pit were Arabian Christians, who lived two or three generations before the age of Mohammed, and were slain by Dhu Nowâs, king of Yemen, a zealous supporter of the Jewish creed, and a cruel persecutor of the Christians. These martyrs were thrown into a pit or trench filled with fire, and thus burnt to ashes.

We have thus stated the account given by the Mohammedans of the history of their creed, before the mission of their prophet; its imitations of the Christian history are sufficiently obvious; instead of the authentic Scriptures we find the Arabians following patriarchal traditions, Rabbinical legends, and the heretical corruptions of Christianity; but we think that their accounts are not, on that account, destitute of value; they indisputably prove that the patriarchal worship of the true God was never forgotten in Arabia, that the existence of the historical personages mentioned in the Old Testament was known to other nations than the Jews, and that so far was Mohammed from claiming originality, that he rested his entire claims to authority on his having restored the faith preached by Adam, by

* The other four are, the ram which Abraham sacrificed instead of Isaac, Balaam's ass, the ass on which Christ made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and the mule on which Mohammed rode to heaven.

Abraham, by Moses, and by Jesus Christ. It is unfortunately true that the Oriental spirit of fiction has woven into the history many wild tales and absurd particularities; but these serve to show the genius of the people for whom the Mohammedan creed was framed. We have quoted only those legends which were essential to the illustration of our subject, but to those who love this species of literature we recommend Maracci's refutation of Mohammedanism.

CHAPTER II.

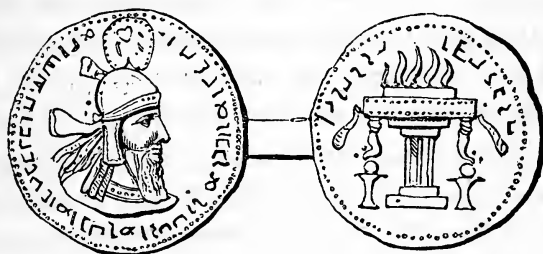
RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL STATE OF THE EAST
BEFORE THE COMING OF MOHAMMED.

THE religious history of Central and Western Asia is intimately connected with that of the Persian empire, a fact which has not yet attracted notice proportionate to its importance. From the age of Cyrus, the Jews, previously remarkable for their proneness to idolatry, became still more conspicuous for their unswerving attachment to the worship of the One God; the great doctrine of the soul's immortality began to occupy a prominent part in their national creed, and the visions of their prophets more clearly to foreshow the future advent of the Messiah. A tradition prevails in the East that Zerdusht, or Zoroaster, the great reformer of the Persian religion, was a pupil of the prophet Daniel, a prophet whom the Jews regard with suspicion, and accuse of having diffused among the Gentiles the faith which was the peculiar inheritance of the children of Abraham. Internal evidence connects together the religion of Zerdusht and that of Buddha, but unfortunately we can only guess at some of the most important events in the history of both creeds. Both were designed to overthrow the domination of a priestly caste, and establish monarchs in absolute authority; both were reforms of an old creed, both occasioned fierce civil war. In the obscurity of ancient Persian history, we find the Kaiânian dynasty, to which Cyrus and Cambyses belong, conspicuous for their hostility to idolatry, their race set aside by a priestly usurper, the Magian Smerdis, the line of ancient monarchs restored in the person of Gushtasp (Darius

Hystaspes), who claimed descent from Jemsheed (Achæmenes), the priestly caste of the Magi persecuted by the new sovereign, and the Magian name covered with contempt and detestation. The war of the Buddhists against the Brahmins, in Hindustán, originated in the same motives, but was not conducted to a similarly successful issue.

Alexander's rapid career of victory subverted the national religion of Persia; we have already mentioned that the books of the Parsees describe him as a cruel persecutor; and we know that his successors, the Seleucidæ, declared that their efforts to Hellenize Central Asia were in perfect accordance with the policy of the great conqueror. The Arsacid dynasty, which wrested Persia from the Seleucidæ, were not Persian in feeling or language, and probably not in blood: the monarchs of that line have left on their medals sufficient proofs of their attachment to foreign institutions; the legends are in the Greek language, and a common addition to the royal titles is that of Philhellên, or Lover of the Greeks. In the frequent persecutions raised against the Christians by the Pagans, and by one Christian sect against another, several fugitives made their escape to Persia, and were hospitably entertained by the Arsacid or Parthian monarchs; they were permitted to preach the Gospel, numerous converts joined themselves to the church, and the time did not appear far distant when Christianity would become the established religion of the Persian empire. But the Oriental spirit of fiction and wild imaginings had corrupted the simplicity of evangelical truth; the Gnostic heresy, or rather heresies, had mixed up with Christianity Plato's philosophic speculations, the visionary theories of the Alexandrian school, and the still more daring guesses of the Oriental sages. At this moment (A.D. 219), a new revolution changed the face of Central

and Western Asia; Ardeshír Babegan, the grandson of Sassan, who claimed descent from the old Kaiānian monarchs, was raised to the throne of Persia, and at once proceeded to restore the national language and the national religion*. The medals of the Sassanides display the symbols of the religion of Zerdusht, commonly, but improperly, called Magian, the altar on which the sacre fire burns, and the head-dress to which mysterious importance was attached; the legends are written in a language first deciphered by Baron de Sacy, which has no similarity to the Greek. The following is a medal of Ardeshír Babegan.



* The Byzantine historians, Agathias and Nicephorus, relate very fully the particulars of the religious change. The former says: "Artaxares (Ardeshír) was addicted to the study of magic, and personally assisted in its secret rites; whence the Magi from that period became more powerful and arrogant: they (the Magi), indeed, existed long before, and derived their name from remote antiquity, but never until his reign did they attain such honour and power; previously they were, in many instances, despised by the magistrates. . . . But now all the Magi are in the greatest esteem and veneration among the Persians; all public affairs are controlled by their counsels and predictions; and they accurately inspect all the important affairs of private life. Nor does anything seem to the Persians lawful and just, which has not been sanctioned and confirmed by one of the Magi."—*Ag. II. 25.*

The confusion between the Magian religion and magical arts in this extract, is a mistake frequently made by many ancient writers.

The legend on the obverse is *Mazdasn Beh Artahschetr Malcan Malca Minogthetri** *Men Yezdan*: that is, "The worshipper of Ormuzd, the excellent Ardeshr, of the celestial race of the gods;" on the reverse is *Artahschetr Yezdani*, that is, "The divine Ardeshr." It is generally known that Ormuzd was the name given to the Supreme Being by Zerdusht and his followers. Nor was this the only example of nationality displayed by the first of the Sassanid monarchs; he took for his royal standard the apron of the patriotic blacksmith, Gávah, an Oriental Wat Tyler, who at some uncertain period had raised an insurrection against a foreign tyrant, and used his apron as a flag of defiance†.

Ardeshr not only restored the ancient Persian religion, but persecuted that which he regarded as its rival‡; the

It arose from the secrecy in which the esoteric or interior doctrines of Zerdusht were kept by his followers. Nicephorus calls Artaxares a Magus, and says that he assumed the sacerdotal tiara.—*Athenæum*, 305.

* De Sacy read *Minotchetri*; the difference is not important.

† This standard was richly ornamented by the successive Sassanid princes, until from its original dimensions it had been enlarged to the length of two-and-twenty feet, by about fifteen in breadth, enriched with jewels of great value. It was taken by the Saracens at the battle of Kádeseh; it made the fortune of the tribe Ben-i-Temiem to whose share it fell.

‡ The Eastern writers complacently detail to us the miracles which induced the new monarch to proscribe polytheism, and re-establish the religion of Zerdusht; but the fact is told us in a more characteristic style by a respectable Rabbinical author: "Orschir (Ardeshr), the son of Babec, the first prince of that family (the Sassanides), caused it to be proclaimed throughout all Persia, that he had taken away the sword of Aristotle the philosopher, which had devoured the inhabitants of that empire five hundred years." Rabbi Abraham's whimsical designation of Grecian customs, as "the sword of Aristotle," refers to a curious portion of Jewish history, which is too

Christians were everywhere persecuted, a sudden check was given to the progress of their religion eastwards, and it was thrown back on the West, not at all improved by its contact with orientalism. It is an additional proof of the connexion between Mohammedanism and Christianity, that Mohammed believed himself called upon to revenge these persecutions of the Christians, and, in consequence, displayed a more inveterate hatred of the Magians or Fire-worshippers, than of any other class of unbelievers.

History informs us that Zerdusht was a Bactrian, that is, a native of the mountainous districts of Irán or Eastern Persia; during the Greek and Arsacid dynasties his religion had sought shelter in its mountain-cradle, and had come forth to triumph under Ardeshér, as it had previously done under Gushtasp. But this geographical observation deserves our attention, because it brings Zerdusht to the borders of Tibet, where Buddhism has prevailed from remote ages. It seems probable that when the Persian religion was restored, it had acquired a deeper tinge of Buddhism, and that it became the means of diffusing many of its corruptions. The extraordinary similarity between the systems and ceremonies of Buddhism and Roman-

amusing to be passed over. In consequence of the intercourse and connexion between the Jews and the Græco-Egyptians, many of the Jewish youths studied the Grecian language and literature. A slight knowledge of Aristotle's logic enabled them to become very acute disputants in the Rabbinical schools, and able to puzzle very grave doctors of the law; whereupon the Rabbis declared Aristotle an infidel, logic a Satanic art, and pronounced the solemn anathema, "Cursed is he that eateth hogs' flesh, and teacheth his child Greek." The Council of Paris, without the slightest suspicion of having been anticipated by the Jewish Sanhedrim, pronounced a similar condemnation on the works of Aristotle, in the thirteenth century.—*Athenæum*, 305.

Catholicism is so strong, that we can scarcely divest ourselves of the opinion that they had been once historically connected, though we have no direct information respecting the circumstances. One fact is certain; from the time of Ardeshr the notion of a *Bodhisatwa*, or vicar of an incarnate Deity, gradually spread over Western Asia, whence it extended to Europe. Mani, Mohammed, and the popes, equally claimed the title, and called themselves Vicars of the Divinity.

Mani, the author of the Manichæan heresy, attempted to act the part in Persia, which Mohammed subsequently performed in Arabia; his object was to form an eclectic religion, a spurious imitation of Christianity, in which the doctrines of truth should be mingled with the dreams of human wisdom or human folly. Like Mohammed, also, he claimed to be the Paraclete or Comforter promised by Christ to his disciples, like him he retired into a solitary cave, to prepare himself, by meditation, for his great design, and like him he wrote a book which he pretended was sent down to him from heaven. "He travelled," says Mirkhond, "through the province of Kashmîr into India, and thence he proceeded to Turkestan and Cathay." "His whole metaphysical doctrine," says C. F. Neumann, "his symbolical language, and, in particular, the division of his followers into laymen (*auditores*), and priests (*electi*), and the different duties prescribed to each of them, seem to be verbally copied from Buddhism. It seems, also, by an oath which the followers of Mani were forced to swear, before they could be received into the orthodox church, that they supposed Zoroaster (Zerdusht), Buddha, and Christ, one and the same person (successive incarnations of divinity*)."

* See Translations from the Chinese and Armenian, by C. F. Neumann.

Mani was put to death (A.D. 272) by Bahram, the fourth monarch of the Sassanid dynasty, but his tenets were extensively propagated both in Asia and Europe.

After the lapse of two hundred years, an impostor named Mazdak attempted to revive the system of Mani, with some additions of his own; he was patronized by Kobad, the seventeenth of the Sassanid line, but was put to death by his son and successor, the celebrated Nushirvan.

Nor were the attempts to form a new doctrine, by mixing Christianity with other religions, confined to Persia; in the third century, Paul of Samosata had created a schism in the church, by attempting to form a new creed from the union of the Jewish and Christian articles of faith; while the philosophers of Alexandria, from the second century to the seventh, seem to have had no other employment than the invention of new and mystic modifications of faith. Even the remnant that adhered to the orthodox belief had not quite escaped the prevailing rage for inventing new articles: the mysteries left unexplained in the Gospels, because they were mysteries beyond the powers of man's limited comprehension, some of the fathers defined with a strict accuracy which would be ludicrous, if it had not been pernicious. Abstract doctrines, impossible to be understood, and worthless if intelligible, were formed into creeds of endless length, and the penalties of excommunication denounced not only against those who disbelieved the mysteries, but against those who did not believe them as interpreted by the favourite theologian of the day. The universal truths of Christianity were so limited by the perverted applications of human ingenuity, that, had the apostles returned to life, they could scarcely have recognised their own doctrines in their altered forms. It would be no difficult task to form a list of the questions debated in the

Eastern churches during the three centuries that preceded the appearance of Mohammed, but it is a task to which our repugnance is insuperable, because it is scarcely possible to hold enthusiasm and fanaticism up to abhorrence without, at least, the risk of exposing religion to the mistakes of the weak, and the misrepresentations of the wicked. Suffice it to say, generally, that the attempt to force uniformity of belief in the veriest trifles, the shape of a hood, or the form of a surplice, had the necessary consequence of bringing the essentials of religion into doubt; for, when men raise trifles to the level of serious matters, a subsequent reaction degrades serious matters to the level of trifles.

There was a pressing necessity for reformation in Oriental Christianity; several had attempted the task in vain; but Mohammed profited by their errors, and, gross as are the defects of his system, it approached nearer the pure simplicity of the Gospel than any of the systems with which it had primarily to contend; it was free from the insane philosophy of the East, and the senseless idolatry of the West.

To complete our view of the religious state of the Oriental world, we must cast a glance at Judaism, as well as Christianity and the religion of the Persians. The dreadful calamity which had broken down the Jewish nation, swept their Temple from the face of the earth, and left their city a monument of desolation, had not tamed their pride, or softened their prejudices. They still believed themselves the chosen people of God, they regarded their sufferings and degradation as a state similar to the Egyptian bondage and Babylonish captivity of their ancestors, a providential preparation for a new age of glory and greatness; they still expected a Messiah, to whose sway the universe would be subject. For the power once possessed by the

priests was substituted the supremacy of the Rabbins, who absolutely created a new religion; it was not idolatry, and yet it was virtually the worst species of polytheism, nay, almost *fetichism**. Jehovah was with them no longer the God of the universe, but of a small section of the human race: the Jews were not peculiarly, but exclusively, the people to whom Divine care was extended. Hence the Talmudists spoke of God with a blasphemous familiarity, which they would scarcely have used when speaking of an earthly sovereign; they attributed to him human passions, not always of the most exalted kind. We must select one of the least offensive passages, that our readers may be able to form some notion of the creed which the Rabbins had substituted for the pure doctrines of the Law and the Prophets:—

“ Rabbi Isaac said, there are three watches in the night, and in each watch the Holy One (blessed be his name) sits down and roars like a lion, and says, ‘Alas! Woe is me! who have desolated my home, burned my Temple, and exiled my children among the nations of the world!’ Rabbi Josè said, ‘One day while travelling I entered into one of the ruins of Jerusalem to pray. Elias, of happy memory, came there and waited until I had finished my prayer.’ When I concluded, he said, ‘Peace be unto thee, Rabbi!’ I replied, ‘Peace be unto thee, Rabbi and Morit!’ He asked, ‘Why have you entered into this ruin?’ I replied, ‘To pray.’ ‘But,’ continued he, ‘what voice have you heard in this ruin?’ I replied, ‘I have heard the Bath Kol†, moaning like a dove, and

* Fetichism is used by continental writers to signify the worship of a local deity, such as the African regards his *fetich* to be.

† Master and teacher.

‡ Literally “the daughter of the voice,” that is, the echo, but the Rabbins always use it for the voice of the Holy Spirit.

saying, I have desolated my house, burned my Temple, and exiled my children among the nations !' Then Elias answered, 'By thy life, and the life of thy head*, it is not only at this hour that the Bath Kol speaks thus, but as often as the Israelites enter into their synagogues and their schools, and make the response (Amen ! Blessed be the Holy Name !), so often the Holy One (blessed be his name) shakes his head and says, 'Happy is the King that they thus celebrate in his house ! What advantage has the Father who has exiled his own children ? unhappy are the children exiled from the table of their Father†.' "

It was notorious that this people had been frequently deluded by false Messiahs ; the memory of the imposture of the second century, when the great Rabbi Akiba supported the claims of him whom they poetically named Bar-Kochab, "the son of the star," was not yet effaced ; though it had not the effect of preventing the enthusiastic nation from following another impostor named Meir, in the century preceding the appearance of Mohammed. Of these circumstances he was well aware, for the Jews abounded in Arabia, and even formed an independent state in that peninsula.

On the whole, we see that the religious state of Western Asia had reached a degree of degradation when violent remedies could alone prevent the triumph of impiety ; and that an opportunity was offered to an ambitious enthusiast of saying to the Jews, "I am your Messiah ;" to the Christians, "I am the promised Paraclete ;" to the followers of Zerdusht, "Behold in me a new Vicar of Ormuzd ;" to the inhabitants of the remote East, "Like all former prophets, I am a Boddhisatwa." With the Jews, however, his chances

* A common Oriental oath.

† See the *Talmud*, division *Zeraim*, section *Beracoth*.

of success were infinitely less than with any of the others; for they never could make the degrading confession that a descendant of the bondwoman was the commissioned leader and teacher of the children of the free.

Since the reign of Ardeshr Babegan, the Persian and Byzantine emperors had contended for the possession of Western Asia with various success; the contest left both weak and exhausted, unable to compete with a new power, whose energies possessed the vigour of youth. Justinian was the last of the Byzantine Cæsars, whose character and conduct were suited to the condition of the empire. His attachment to Christianity was a crime which the historian of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire could not forgive: he has, therefore, searched out all the gross slanders and obscene calumnies which Procopius raked together in his anecdotes; but he has forgotten that his authority stands self-convicted of falsehood, that while Justinian lived, the panegyrics of Procopius were as fulsome and grovelling as his calumnies after the death of the Emperor are gross and disgusting. In but one point of view are the *Anecdota* of Procopius valuable; they show how ready the flatterer is to become the calumniator, and how soon the adulation of the depraved changes to libel and defamation.

The character of Justinian forms an honourable contrast to the imbecility and tyranny of those who preceded and followed him on the throne of Constantinople. His generals restored the ancient limits of the Roman empire; and though to them the chief praise be due, surely some honour reflects on him by whose judgment they were selected: his habits of private life were strictly moral, his application to business intense, his love of learning indisputable, his zeal for religion unsullied by even the suspicion

of base motive. In an age of cruelty and persecution he was honourably distinguished by a mild and merciful disposition: it is true that he affixed penalties to dissent from the established religion, which have been studiously preserved by Gibbon, but neither in severity nor extent do they equal the persecuting edicts of Julian, whom the same writer describes as a model of philosophic liberality. His ingratitude to Belisarius is the greatest blot on his memory; but there are circumstances by which his conduct in this instance was greatly extenuated, though it cannot be wholly excused. His vast legal reform, his code of jurisprudence, the foundation of the Civil Law throughout Europe, was a project which a great mind could alone devise and execute.

We turn with pain to his successors: under Justin II., the Lombards settled in Italy, the Avars occupied the line of the Danube, and the Persians seized fresh provinces in Western Asia. Tiberius, the next sovereign, died after a brief reign, and was succeeded by his son-in-law, Maurice, a soldier of fortune. Persia was torn by civil wars, but Maurice placed Chosroes II. on the throne of his Sassanid ancestors; by this service he secured tranquillity on his eastern frontiers, and was enabled to direct the whole strength of his empire against the barbarians of the north and west. But Maurice was murdered by the rebel Phocas, and the crime was sanctioned by Pope Gregory the Great, who did not scruple to favour an assassin and a traitor when his approbation was rewarded by an extension of the papal authority. Phocas disgusted his supporters by his monstrous vices and equally monstrous folly; he was in his turn deposed and murdered: his successor was Heraclius, the Exarch of Africa. In his reign Mohammed first promulgated his doctrines, but this is not the only circumstance

that renders him one of the most remarkable personages in Byzantine history.

After the murder of Maurice, Chosroes, under the honourable pretence of revenging the cruel fate of his benefactor, waged war against the usurper, and wrested from him the greater part of Syria. He did not cease from hostilities when Heraclius became emperor, but pursuing his victorious career, established the supremacy of Persia over Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and Asia Minor. Had he possessed a fleet, Constantinople itself might have fallen, but his cavalry penetrated to the Asiatic side of the Dardanelles, and for ten years, a hostile camp could be seen from the walls of the capital of the Eastern empire. The Avars and other barbarians, committed equal devastations in the European provinces, while Heraclius continued during twelve years an inactive spectator of these calamities. At length, he suddenly was roused from his lethargy, and blazed forth as a patriot and a hero; displaying energy, zeal and ability, worthy of the Roman empire in its most proud and palmy days. He gained a signal victory over the Persians in Cilicia, and then speedily returning, drove the Avars back beyond the Danube. But he meditated a still more glorious enterprise, the invasion of the Persian empire itself, by a route which had been hitherto unattempted. It has been already mentioned that the Parthian dynasty of the Arsacidæ was driven from the Persian throne by the Sassanides. The expelled line of sovereigns sought refuge in the mountains of Armenia, where a branch of their family had established a Christian kingdom. Heraclius knew that the Armenians were bitter enemies of the Persians, and he therefore hoped that in their country he should find faithful allies, and a line of fortresses that would form a secure base for his operations. He sailed

up the Euxine Sea, and disembarking at Trebizond, led his forces through a rugged and mountainous country into the very heart of Persia. During five brilliant campaigns, he revenged on the Persians the injuries that they had inflicted on the Roman provinces, while the senate and people of Constantinople scarce received any intelligence of their sovereign, and only knew of his victories by their effect of withdrawing the Persians from Asia Minor. At this period, the Byzantines emulated the valour of their sovereign, and inflicted a severe defeat on the Avars, who besieged their city. The complete overthrow of the Persians took place near the site of the ancient Nineveh, the once proud capital of the Assyrian empire, but of which the very ruins have long since perished. In this fatal field, the power of the Sassanides was cloven down, and Chosroes, after a long career of victory, irretrievably defeated. The vanquished monarch was deposed and murdered by his own son, who immediately offered terms of peace. Heraclius returned in triumph to his capital, and instantly sunk again into the sloth and infamy from which he had so gloriously emerged.

The history of Persia, from the age of Nushirvan, resembles that of the Eastern empire after the death of Justinian; the resources of the country were wasted in foreign wars, or destroyed by intestine commotions; tyrannical monarchs owed their thrones to treason and assassination, the sovereign never deigned to regard the welfare of his subjects, and the subjects, in their turn, were indifferent to the fate of their sovereign.

If, from this gloomy picture, we cast a glance westward, we shall find no relief; Europe was still in a state of transition, the barbarians had trampled down the empire of the West, but had not as yet replaced it by permanent esta-

blishments. The papal supremacy alone flourished; it accommodated itself to every revolution, and gained strength by every change. The independent national churches were gradually falling beneath its sway; those of Gaul, Britain, and Spain, had been already subverted, by means disgraceful to the Christian name; we will not say that Mohammed was the commissioned scourge of the world, but rarely has a period occurred in the annals of mankind, when the prevalence of iniquity required the application of so sharp a remedy.

CHAPTER III.

STATE OF ARABIA BEFORE AND AT THE TIME OF
MOHAMMED'S BIRTH.

THE sterile peninsula of Arabia lies between the Red and Persian Gulfs and the Indian Ocean; its remaining boundaries are the Syrian desert and the river Euphrates; from its vicinity to those parts of Central and Western Asia in which the great revolutions of the Oriental world were effected, it is a country famous in history; but, separated by deserts from civilized nations, it is a country of whose internal condition ancient writers knew very little, and moderns not a great deal. In the Holy Scripture, Arabia is named Kedem, or the East; it is uncertain from whence it derived its present appellation, but the most probable conjecture is, that it was so termed from the Hebrew *Arabah*, "a desert." The native traditions claim for the Arabs a double origin; they assert, that the elder tribes are descended from Joktan, the son of Heber, and the junior tribes or Mostarabs (mixed Arabs) from Ishmael, the son of Abraham.

The peninsula is divided into several districts, of which Yemen, or Happy Arabia, and Hejaz, which may be regarded as the Arabic Holy Land, are the most remarkable. From the earliest period of time, the greater part of this peninsula has been occupied by a pastoral people, divided into tribes, having no settled habitations, but wandering over the desert in search of a scanty subsistence for their flocks and herds. The character of these wanderers, or as they are termed, Bedouins*, has been little changed by

* From the Arabic *bedowi*, "a native of the desert."

the lapse of centuries; they are ardent lovers of independence, impatient of the least control, chivalrous in their notions of honour, vindictive even to ferocity, full of wild imaginations and generous feelings, but cruel enemies and habitual robbers. The only authority which the Bedouin obeys is that of his chief, whom he regards as the father rather than the ruler of his tribe; to him consequently, he yields ready submission, nor can anything shake his allegiance.

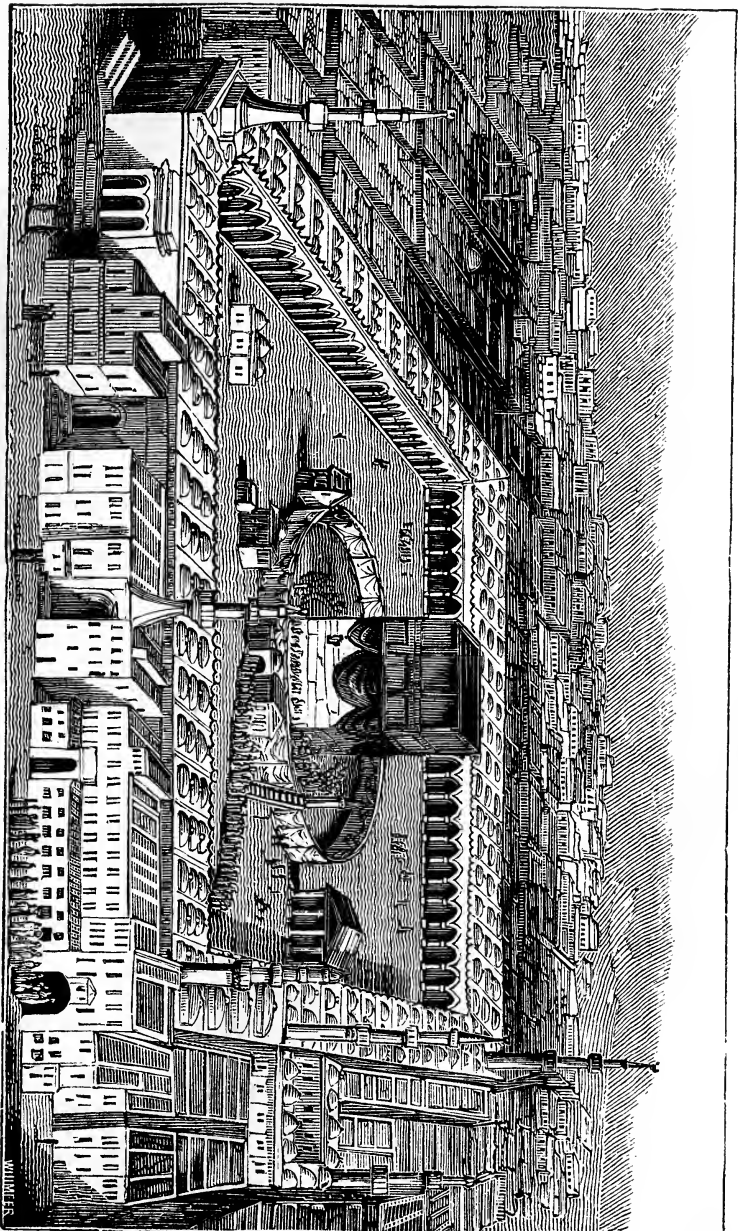
But all the Arabs do not dwell in tents; the temptations of permanent pasture, or profitable traffic, led to the formation of towns; the latter cause led to the building of the cities Mecca and Medina, at some very remote period, in the Hejaz, which forms part of sandy Arabia. Mecca was built at the intersection of two profitable lines of commerce, one running across the peninsula, by which the commodities of Africa and India were interchanged; the other, connecting Syria and the southern provinces of the Greek empire with Arabia Felix, and the countries round the Indian Ocean; for this overland communication was deemed preferable to encountering the dangers of the Red Sea. Religion, in the East, has always been allied with commerce; at every great mart, we find a temple erected, whose sanctity protected traffic, and reverence for which was supposed to ensure integrity. The temple of Mecca was called the Kaaba: we have already mentioned the tradition, that it was built by Abraham, and dedicated to the worship of the true God: but in the age preceding the birth of Mohammed, and probably during a long antecedent period, it had been desecrated by idolatry. The Kaaba, like the temple of Delphi in Greece, was regarded as the sanctuary of the entire nation; thither came all eminent for their skill in eloquence and poetry, the only intellectual qualifications

valued by the Arabians, and within its precincts were suspended the compositions deemed worthy of being had in remembrance.

The government of Mecca was an aristocracy, modified by the old patriarchal dependence of the tribes on their chieftains. At some unknown period, one of those tribes, that of the Koreish, obtained the guardianship of the Kaaba, and in consequence, political supremacy in Mecca. They used their power for a good purpose, extending the trade of the city by the establishment of caravans, and opening to the citizens new channels of lucrative commerce. As the Koreish was the principal tribe, so in it the house of Haschem was the principal family; for several generations, the pontificate of the Kaaba, and the civil government of Mecca, had been hereditary in this family, and had been generally conducted with great ability and integrity. In the very year that Mohammed was born, they defended Mecca from a powerful foe, Abrahah, king or viceroy of Yemen; the history of the war is grossly disguised by fiction, but as allusion is made to it in the Korán, it is necessary to give an outline of the legend.

Abrahah, the viceroy, or rather tributary monarch of Yemen, was an Ethiopian by birth, and a Christian in religion; he paid homage to the Najáshi, or sovereign of Ethiopia, but was allowed to enjoy a greater share of authority than is usually accorded to dependent monarchs. Perceiving that the celebrity of the Kaaba was one of the chief causes of the prosperity of Mecca, he erected a rival temple in his capital city Senáa, and dedicated it to Christian worship. The Koreish, soon beginning to perceive that the number of pilgrims who came to their shrine was lamentably diminished, long meditated some plan for desecrating the rival place of worship. One of their tribe was

THE CITY OF MECCA.



WILKES



at length sent secretly to Senáa, he entered the church by night, and defiled it by a gross pollution. Not satisfied with making his escape, he boasted everywhere of his crime, he declared that the God of Senáa was weak and powerless. Justly incensed at the insult and profanation, Abrahah sent to demand satisfaction from the Koreish; a contemptuous answer was returned, upon which he levied an immense army, vowing that he would pillage Mecca, and level the Kaaba with the ground. At the approach of his mighty host, many of the Meccans fled to the mountains, and scarcely enough citizens remained to man the walls. But God* would not yield to sacrilege a temple dedicated to his worship by Abraham, "the father of the faithful;" when the elephant on which Abrahah rode approached Mecca, no art could prevail on him to advance towards the city, though the animal moved readily in any other direction. While the army of Abrahah wondered at this prodigy, there appeared over their heads a flock of birds, similar to swallows, each of which carried three stones, one in each claw and one in the bill: these, the birds dropped on Abrahah's soldiers, and every one struck, fell instantly dead. As if this part of the story was not sufficiently miraculous, some of the Mohammedan doctors add, that each stone was marked with the name of the person it was destined to slay. To complete their destruction, God sent a mighty flood which swept not only the dead bodies, but many of the living, into the sea. Abrahah, almost the sole survivor of his mighty host, fled to Senáa, and thence to the court of Najáshi. When brought before the king, he was asked what sort of birds had caused this destruction? upon which he pointed to one directly over his head, that

* Here the legend is strangely inconsistent, for the Kaaba was at this time an idolatrous temple.

had followed him all the way to Mecca. Immediately after, the bird dropped on him the fatal stone, and he fell dead in the presence of the court.

According to another account, Abrahah died of a painful disease at Senáa, and the person slain before the Najáshi was a fugitive named Abu Yascùm.

What we have already said of the corrupt state of Christianity in the East is applicable to Arabia, a country which was proverbially fruitful in heresies. There was a sect in that peninsula which denied the resurrection and the immortality of the soul; there Ebion and Beryllus first propagated their pernicious doctrines, and it was the chief seat of the Collyridians, who deemed the Virgin Mary a person of the Trinity, and derived their name from a twisted cake called *collyris*, which they offered at her shrine. Many curious circumstances are related of the early propagation of Christianity in Arabia, but that which best merits attention, is the cause assigned for the conversion of the king of Hira.

Al Nooman, king of Hira, had, in a drunken fit, ordered two of his faithful companions to be buried alive; when he recovered his senses, and found that his commands had been fatally obeyed, he was overwhelmed with grief. As an expiation he erected for them a magnificent sepulchre, and dedicated two days in the year to their memory. On one of these, called the Fortunate day, the king loaded the first stranger he met with magnificent gifts, but whoever presented himself on the second day, was sacrificed at the monument. On one of these days, Al Nooman met an Arab of the tribe of Tay, by whom he had once been hospitably entertained, and found himself in a great strait, being obliged either to violate his oath to the memory of his friends, or break through the laws of hospitality, which

the Arabs religiously observe. At length he offered the Arab a reprieve for a year and a day, provided that he could find a surety for his return. One of the prince's court, moved with compassion, presented himself, and the Arab departed. When the last day of the stipulated term arrived, and the Arab had not appeared, his surety was led forth to suffer; but the courtiers remonstrated, declaring that he could not legally be executed until the sun sunk beneath the horizon. In the midst of the debate, the Arab appeared and offered himself to the executioner. Al Nooman, astonished, asked him what religion enjoined such a scrupulous observance of faith? and was answered, the Christian; whereupon he ordered the doctrines of Christianity to be explained to him, and became a convert. He and his subjects were baptized, the lives of the Arab and his surety spared, and the barbarous custom by which they had been endangered, completely abolished.

Judaism in Arabia flourished more than in any part of the East; it was professed by whole tribes, and was the established faith in the powerful kingdom of the Hamyarites. The account of the Martyrs of the Pit, in the first chapter, shows that the Jews, when they had power, were bitter persecutors of the Christians; their cruelties were, however, restrained when the Ethiopian monarch acquired supremacy in Yemen.

The Persian religion penetrated only into a small part of north-eastern Arabia, but the Sabian superstition, which seems not to have been very unlike it, prevailed over the greater part of the peninsula. The principles of Sabianism seem, indeed, common to all the false religions of Asia; its professors believed in the Divine Unity, but supposed that the Supreme had delegated his authority over the earth, to inferior intelligences, whom men were bound to worship.

The doctrine opened a door for all the corruptions and variations of idolatry, even for fetichism, its worst and most degrading form. If it was supposed that each intelligence took charge of a particular tribe or family, the worship of the favoured portion would be given exclusively to its patron, and thus by the natural progress of corruption, the worship of the Universal God would be exchanged for that of the National, and that again, would be superseded by the worship of the fetiche, or family idol. In the Sabian superstitions, the worship of the host of heaven (Saba *) formed so conspicuous a part, that from this circumstance it derives its name. There were temples erected in Arabia to the seven planets and the most conspicuous stars, and when Mohammed enumerates the titles of the Supreme, he especially mentions that he is the Lord of the Dog-star. Some of the superstitious practices of the pagan Arabs deserve to be mentioned, because they show us how cautious historians should be, in inferring identity of origin from similarity of customs. "The human mind," says a celebrated author, "whenever it is placed in the same situation, will in ages the most distant, and countries the most remote, assume the same form, and be distinguished by the same manners." In some tribes, when an Arab died, his camel was sacrificed at the grave, that he might not be obliged to go on foot in the other world. We find traces of the same superstition among our German ancestors, and the Indians of North America†. Others believed that the soul of a person unjustly slain, found no rest, but animated the form of a bird, which cried *Oscûni, Oscûni*,

* צבא *Tzabor*, a host: plur. צבאות *Tzabaoth*, commonly written *Sabaoth*, host.

† See Longfellow's "Burial of the Minnisink," *Readings in Poetry*, 4th edit. page 363.

that is, "Give to me drink," until its thirst was satisfied by the murderer's blood. We find the following similar article of faith in a recent Italian publication.

"An old and barbarous notion still prevails amongst us, that the spirits of those who have fallen victims to treachery can never enjoy peace if their death be not avenged with blood, often, alas ! with torrents of blood. My brother not having obtained this inhuman satisfaction, is believed to be destitute in his sepulchre of a bed to rest on when weary ; of food to refresh him, when tormented with hunger ; therefore are his room and his bed constantly kept ready for his accommodation, and his usual seat is invariably reserved for him at table*."

Even among the pagan Arabs there were to be found many who were disgusted by the follies of idolatry, but not disposed to seek out a better religion ; these were named Zendists, and resembled in their doctrines the Jewish Sadducees and the sceptics of all ages. Zendism had made great progress among the tribe of the Koreish ; those who adopted its tenets were the most bitter enemies of Mohammed, for on many occasions philosophic infidels have been foremost in urging forward the work of persecution.

We have said that hospitality and generosity were deemed by the Arabians virtues paramount to all others. This, indeed, is always the characteristic of a semi-barbarous people ; "an open hand" is regarded by the vulgar of every nation as an atonement for the worst vices, not merely because its benefits are felt more peculiarly by themselves, but because men must have advanced to that point in civilization when the notion of property is rightly conceived, before they can discover that improvidence is a crime, and prudence a virtue. The legends related in praise of extrava-

* *Preziosa di Santuri*, &c. 2 vols. Turin, 1833.

gant generosity are innumerable; we shall quote a few relating to Hatim Tai, the favourite hero of Arabian romance; a hero of whom the following character is given, which embodies all the virtues that the sons of the desert wish to see combined in a chief. "Hatim was liberal, wise, brave, and victorious: when he fought he conquered; when he plundered he carried off; when he was asked he gave; when he shot his arrow he hit the mark; and whomsoever he took captive he liberated*." Hatim's fame for liberality spread over all the East: the sovereign of Damascus†, to try its extent, sent to ask him for twenty camels with red hair and black eyes; a species of camel very rare, and consequently of great value. By offering to pay a double price, Hatim collected a hundred such camels, and sent them to Damascus; the monarch, not to be outdone in generosity, sent them back laden with the richest treasures, but Hatim, without a moment's hesitation, ordered the animals, with their precious loads, to be distributed to those from whom they were originally purchased. Shortly afterwards the Emperor of Constantinople wished to make the same experiment; he sent an ambassador to demand from Hatim a valuable steed, to which he was much attached. The officer arrived late at night, was hospitably entertained, and in the morning stated the object of his mission. "It is too late," replied Hatim; "all my flocks and herds are at a distant pasture, and having nothing else wherewith to entertain you, I ordered that steed to be slain for your repast." The reputation of Hatim gave great offence to Naman, king

* See the *Adventures of Hatim Tai*, translated by S. Arnot, Esq., and published by the Oriental Translation Fund. One of the most interesting Oriental romances ever published.

† This story involves a gross anachronism, for in the time of Hatim Damascus formed part of the Greek empire.

of Yemen, who commissioned one of his courtiers to assassinate him. In obedience to the royal command, the emissary sought the Arabian tents; on his road he met a man of dignified aspect, who invited him to share his hospitality. After a splendid repast, the courtier rose to depart, and, in reply to the pressing invitations of his host, stated the dangerous task that he had undertaken. To his great astonishment, the host, throwing open his vest, exclaimed, "Strike boldly, I am Hatim, and strike at once, that you may have time to escape the vengeance of my friends." These words were a thunderbolt to the courtier, he fell at the feet of Hatim, and solicited his forgiveness; after which he returned with all speed to Yemen. After the death of Hatim, his brother Cherbeka resolved to follow his example, but was dissuaded by his mother, who said, "Son, it is not in thy nature." He disregarded the admonition, and opened the store-house with seventy doors, at which his brother used to distribute alms; the mother, disguised as a beggar, presented herself at the first door and was relieved; she had similar success at the second, but, when she came to the third, Cherbeka exclaimed, "Twice have I relieved thee, and comest thou again?" His mother, discovering herself, replied, "Did I not tell thee, my son, that thou couldst not equal the liberality of thy brother? I tried him as I have tried thee, and he relieved me at each of the seventy doors, without asking me a question. But I knew thy nature and his; when I suckled thee, and one nipple was in thy mouth, thou always heldest thy hand upon the other, lest any one should seize it; but the conduct of Hatim was directly the contrary. He gave at every door, and made no observation."

The tribe of which Hatim was the chief, refused to become proselytes to Islamism, wherefore Mohammed ordered them all to be exterminated, with the exception of

Hatim's daughter. She, however, refused to survive the destruction of her kindred. "Take back," said she to the Prophet, "your inhuman kindness, it would be to me a punishment ten thousand times worse than that which you prepare for my race; either pardon all, or let me perish with them." Mohammed, struck by such generous sentiments, granted, for her sake, pardon to the entire tribe.

The Arabs are celebrated for their ingenuity and subtilty of spirit; in illustration of their keen observations, the following anecdote is related by several writers. Three Arabian brothers, who were travelling for their improvement, were met by a camel-driver, who asked them if they had seen his beast, which had unfortunately gone astray? "Did not your camel want an eye?" asked the first. "Had he not lost a front tooth?" was the query of the second. "Was not he lame?" interrogated the third. The camel-driver answered all these questions in the affirmative; and, supposing that they had seen the beast, asked them to tell him where it was? The brothers replied, "Pursue the road on which we are travelling." After some time, they said to him, "He is laden with corn:" soon after they added, "He had a pannier of honey on one side, and of oil on the other." The owner of the camel, convinced by the particularity of their description that they had seen the beast, reiterated his request that they would tell him where it was; but when they swore that they had never seen the camel, and had heard of it only from himself, he regarded them as robbers, and accused them before the judge. The brothers were thrown into prison; but their rank being subsequently recognized, they were liberated and sent to the royal palace. After the monarch had entertained them hospitably, he asked them how they were able to describe with such precision an animal that they had never seen? They replied, "We saw his track, and observed that the

grass was cropped only at one side, whence we conjectured that he wanted an eye: we remarked, in the grass that he cropped, there was the trace of his wanting a tooth; and, from the impression of his feet, one appeared to have been dragged, whence we conjectured that he was lame. The same impression showed that he was heavily laden; and as the fore-feet had sunk deeper than those behind, we guessed that the load was grain, which is usually placed close to the camel's neck; seeing ants in clusters on one side of the road, we knew that drops of oil had fallen there; while swarms of flies on the other side showed honey to have been scattered in that direction."

The love that the Arabians have for their noble breed of horses is well known; and equally notorious is the merit of their steeds. They are generally of a delicate make, but able to support the fatigue of very long journeys; well-proportioned, spirited, with small bellies, little ears, and a short tail. They have so little vice that they allow themselves to be tended by women and children, and they wander quietly over the plains, mixed with the other cattle: hence the Arab horsemen frequently dispense with the use of a saddle, and use a simple halter as a bridle. They are able to endure thirst; and are frequently fed with camels' milk. They receive their food in small portions, and are rarely shod, because shoes are not necessary in the smooth plains of the desert. It is a common proverb, "Cherish the steed that has the breast of a lion, and the rump of a wolf." Great attention is paid to the genealogy of the different races, and certificates of their blood and antiquity are common. We shall, as a matter of curiosity, insert one of these documents, extracted from *Les Mines de l'Orient*, vol. ii., to which we have been indebted for this brief notice of the horses of Arabia.

“In the name of God, the most merciful, from whom alone we expect aid and succour. The prophet says, ‘My people shall never join to affirm a lie.’

“The following is the object of this authentic document:—we the undersigned attest, certify, and declare, swearing by our fate, our fortune, and our girdles, that the bay mare, having a white star in her forehead, and white fetlocks on the off-side, is of a noble breed for three generations on both sides. Her dam was of the Seglaman, and her sire of the Elisebban blood: she unites all the qualities of those mares, of which the prophet says, ‘Their breasts are treasures, and their backs seats of honour.’

“Supported by the testimony of our predecessors, we attest, on our fate and fortunes, that the mare in question is of noble descent, that she is as pure as milk, renowned for swiftness and speed, able to bear thirst, and accustomed to the fatigues of long journeys. In witness whereof, we have delivered the present certificate after what we have seen and known ourselves. God is the best of witnesses.”—Signed and sealed.

The similarity in character between the Arabian heroes and the knights errant of the middle ages, is naturally suggested by their common love for their steeds, their high sense of honour, their thirst of revenge, and their praise of hospitality; but this is a topic which would lead us too far from our immediate subject; enough has been said to show what was the genius and character of the nation in which Islámism was first promulgated.

The romance of Antar gives us the most perfect notion of Arabic chivalry; the age of the hero's exploits is fabled to have been half a century before the coming of Mohammed, and consequently it furnishes us with a picture of manners, drawn by a native artist. The records on which

this romance is founded, existed in the time of Mohammed, for one of the traditions, traced to him with the greatest certainty, is his recommendation of these national legends; "Relate to your children the traditions concerning Antar, for they will render their hearts firmer than the rocks." In the reign of Harún-al-Raschíd, the celebrated cotemporary of Charlemagne, these legends were first formed into a continuous story by Assmäi, one of the learned men who adorned the court of that Khaliph. Some additions were made in the reign of the Khaliph Maimún, who was, like Antar himself, the son of a slave; but the final edition of the work was published in an uncertain age, by Seyid Yussúf-ebn-Ismail. The similarity of the style in the greater part of the romance to the Moallakat, or collection of the poems suspended in the Kaaba before the age of Mohammed, one of which was the composition of Antar himself, attests its great antiquity, or at least the antiquity of the materials from which it was composed. M. Von Hammer, undoubtedly the first Oriental scholar in Europe, thus speaks of this extraordinary picture of Arabic chivalry:—"The whole of this work may be esteemed as a faithful account of the principal tribes of the Arabs, and particularly of the tribe of Abs, from which Antar sprung, in the time of Nushirvan, king of Persia, more faithful *in painting manners*, than describing events*." A great portion of the work has been translated into English by Mr. Hamilton; but a more interesting and characteristic part has been recently published in France by M. A. C. de Perceval†, containing the account of the death of Antar,

* See M. Von Hammer's articles on *Antar* in *Les Mines de l'Orient* for 1802, and also in the January and February numbers of the *New Monthly Magazine* for 1820.

† In No. LXIII. of the *Nouveau Journal Asiatique*, published August, 1833.

an abridgment of which may be useful in illustrating our present subject. It is necessary to premise that Antar is represented as commissioned by Providence to humble the savage pride of the Arabian warriors, and prepare the way for Mohammed. The son of a black concubine, he was designed by his father for no nobler occupation than the guardianship of the flocks, but the services which he rendered to the tribe of Banú-Abs, the admiration inspired by his valour, and the fame of his poetical abilities, enabled him to triumph over the prejudices which condemned him to a servile condition. He soon attained the rank of a noble, and, notwithstanding the obstacles raised by a thousand enemies, envious of his glory, he married Abla, a young lady of illustrious birth, his paternal cousin, who had long been the object of his warmest affections.

Amongst the warriors whom he had subdued was Wezar, a fierce and vindictive savage, who laid several plots against the life of his generous conqueror. Twice Antar heroically granted him pardon; but when a third attempt at assassination was made, he ordered the wretch to be deprived of sight. These details were necessary to explain the following extract; which, however, is an imitation rather than a translation, many details and references to preceding facts being omitted*.

* “The English reader will be surprised to find in these productions so few of those lofty epithets and inflated metaphors, which are generally considered characteristic of the Oriental mode of composition; he will, probably, be more surprised to hear, that during the flourishing periods of Arabian literature, this bombast style was almost unknown, and that the best writers, both of poetry and prose, expressed themselves in a language as chaste and simple as that of Prior or of Addison. . . . The writer who had obtained celebrity in the court of Bagdad during the splendour of the Khaliphat, would have smiled equally at the prosaic poetry of his Euro-

THE DEATH OF ANTAR.

WEZAR secretly meditated revenge:—though his eyes were deprived of sight, he had lost little of his skill in archery. His ear, accustomed by long habit to trace the movements of wild beasts by the sound of their footsteps, sufficed to direct his aim, and never did an arrow from his bow miss the mark. His sleepless hatred eagerly received the news which fame brought him respecting his enemy. He learned that Antar, after a perilous and distant expedition, was about to return home, rendered more illustrious by his new exploits, and bringing an immense booty as rich as the royal treasures of Chosroes. On receiving the intelligence, Wezar wept with envy and rage; he summoned Nedim, his faithful slave, and thus addressed him:—"Too long has fortune protected him, whose success drives me to despair. Ten tedious years have elapsed since the glowing iron seared these sightless eye-balls, and yet I am not revenged. But at last the moment has arrived in which I shall efface my shame, and quench in his blood the flame which devours my heart. Antar is encamped on the banks of the Euphrates; thither I will pursue him, and live concealed in the reeds and bushes until fate delivers him into my hands." He orders his slave to bring him his camel, whose speed rivalled that of the swift ostrich. He arms himself with his bow, and fills his quiver with poisoned arrows. Nedim compels the camel to kneel before his master, aids Wezar to mount, and guides the steps of the docile animal.

pean cotemporaries, the bards and the troubadours, and at the poetic prose of his own countrymen, the present Orientals."—*Professor Carlyle's Specimens*, Preface, page 9.

When they had plunged into the dreary depths of the arid desert, Wezar gave vent to his wrath: "My mutilated eyelids can never close in sweet sleep; an eternal night surrounds me. Thrice vanquished, I have rolled in the dust, and my tribe rejects me as an enemy. Misfortunes be upon thee, Antar, son of Schedad, sole cause of my torment and my shame; envy consumes my soul and wastes my body. May favourable fortune at last cause thee to fall by this hand." After several days of toilsome journeying they passed the deserts, and entered the plains which the Euphrates waters, a fertile country planted with trees, and clothed with verdure. When they reached the river, Nedim cast his eyes towards the opposite bank; he beholds tents richly decorated, numerous flocks, camels wandering over the plain, lances planted in the earth, horses harnessed, and picketted before the tents of their masters. He hears the songs of young maidens, and the sound of musical instruments: one tent, more beautiful and exalted than the rest, was erected at a short distance from the river; in front of it was a long lance, and a horse as black as ebony. Nedim recognised the noble courser and terrible lance of Antar; he halted the camel, and concealed himself and his master behind the bushes. When night had spread her gloomy shade over the earth, Wezar said to his slave, "Let us quit this place; distant voices sound in my ear. Place me near the river; my heart tells me that a signal blow is about to render my name illustrious for ever." Nedim leads him by the hand, places him opposite the tent of Antar, and presents him his bow and quiver. Wezar chooses the sharpest of his arrows, fits it to the bow, and with attentive ear waits the moment of vengeance.

Antar, in profound security, was enjoying the company

of his beloved Ablā; he was suddenly disturbed by the baying of the watch-dogs round the camp, and quitting his spouse, he rushed into the open air. The night was dark and cloudy; hearing the baying of the dogs renewed from the side of the camp next the river, he rushed to the bank in an evil hour, and called his brother Jerir to reconnoitre the other side. Scarcely had he raised his powerful voice, which made hills and valleys resound, when an arrow struck his right side, and penetrated deep into his body.

No groan, no complaint unworthy his courage, betrayed his pain; he drew the shaft from the wound and exclaimed, "O thou, whose perfidious hand is guided by the sound of my voice, to strike me in the shades of night, would that I could know thee, that I might pursue thee to the depths of the desert, and give thy flesh to feed the birds of the air, and the beasts of the field. Traitor, who dared not attack me in the face of day, thou shalt not escape my vengeance, thou shalt not enjoy the fruits of thy treachery!" Wezar heard these words, and fear seized his heart. Believing that his shaft had failed, the idea of Antar, and of the punishment he would inflict, so terrified him, that he fell at the feet of his slave without motion. Nedim, seeing that his master lay stark and cold, quickly mounted the camel and rode away.

In the meantime Jerir had come up, at the sound of his brother's voice. Antar informed him that he had been wounded by a shaft from the opposite side of the river, by an unknown hand, ordered him to pursue the assassin, and returned to his tent with tottering steps. Jerir laid aside his robes, and plunged into the stream; soon he reaches the opposite bank, he gropes about in the darkness, and finds a body lying senseless on the sand, near which he discovers a bow and quiver. Uncertain whether this

motionless body could be restored to life, but hoping to gain some elucidation from the sight of the body, he places it upon his shoulders, and again crossing the river, enters the tent of his brother.

Extended on the bed of sickness, surrounded by his disconsolate friends, Antar was a prey to the most cruel agonies. The tender Abba was bandaging his wound, which she bathed with her tears. At this moment Jerir entered, bearing the body of Wezar, which, with the bow and arrows, he laid at the feet of his brother. Scarcely had Antar cast a glance on the mutilated visage, where ferocity was still imprinted, ere he recognised the implacable enemy who had so often sworn his destruction. He doubted not that this hand had directed the fatal shaft, and he knew that the arrow was poisoned. Then sweet hope abandoned his heart, and the image of death alone presented itself to his view. He contemplated it with resignation, and, lost in thought, preserved for a time a profound silence. The combats in which he had conquered Wezar, without being able to subdue his soul of iron, the perseverance with which the traitor had pursued his vengeance, finally, divine justice which had not permitted the assassin to survive his crime, presented themselves to his mind. At length, waking from his reverie, he exclaimed, "The misfortune of mine enemy has satisfied my soul; his death consoles me for my approaching dissolution, which he will not witness. Yes, we should thank destiny when we survive an enemy, a day, or even an instant." Then addressing the corpse of Wezar, he said, "Wretch, thou hast not tasted the pleasure of vengeance, for I have survived thy death. But you, warriors, jealous of my glory, will rejoice in my calamitous fate; you, rivals that I have subdued, whose heart, gnawed by envy, cannot forget the shame of defeat. Triumph then, since

such is the immutable will of the Eternal Being, whose decrees no mortal can foresee or avoid."

"Son of my uncle," said Abla, "why renounce hope? Why let your courage sink? Should a slight wound of an arrow discourage you, who, despising the edge of sabre and point of lance, have borne so many deep and dangerous wounds, whose scars cover your body." "Abla," replied Antar, "my life approaches its close, the arrow which struck me was poisoned. Recognise in that carcass the features of Wezar, and cease to flatter yourself with vain hope."

At these words Abla made the air resound with her cries, she rent her garments, tore her flowing locks, and cast dust upon her head. The women who surrounded her joined in her grief, the camp soon responded to their plaintive cries, and to the silence of night, succeeded the tumult and the cries of despair.

Then Antar said to his weeping friends, "Dry your tears, the Most High has subjected us all to the same law, and no one can withdraw himself from the decrees of destiny." Then turning to Abla, he said, "Beloved spouse, who shall defend thy honour and life after the death of Antar? I know well that the tribe of Banú-Abs, deprived of the support of my arm, must be overwhelmed by its numerous enemies, and annihilated by all the tribes of Arabia, whom vengeance will unite against it. A second husband, *another I*, can alone save you from the horrors of slavery. Of all the warriors of the desert, Amer, and Zeid-al-Khaïl *, are those whose valour will best protect your life and liberty. Choose then one of them, and offer him your hand. In order that you may return safely to

* Zeid-al-Khaïl survived to the age of Mohammed, and embraced the faith of Islâm; his surname was changed from al-Khaïl (the equestrian), to al-Khaïr (the beneficent).

the children of Abs and securely pass the desert, you must mount my courser Abjar, and clothe yourself in my armour: in this disguise fear no attack, but proceed with confidence, not deigning to salute any warriors you may meet. The sight of the horse and arms of the son of Schedad, will suffice to intimidate the boldest."

The curtain of darkness was now withdrawn, morning appeared in smiling beauty, and began to colour the mountain-tops. Antar caused himself to be carried out of his tent, and there distributed to his friends and relatives the numerous flocks, camels, and coursers that he possessed, and all the booty he had gained in his late expedition, reserving for Abla the most considerable portion. After this distribution he bade adieu to his friend Amrú, and ordered him to return to his tribe, before the report of his death spread through Arabia, and encouraged their common enemies to assail him. Vainly Amrú protested that he would not quit him, and that he wished to escort Abla to the tribe of Banú-Abs. "No," replied Antar, "whilst a spark of life remains, Abla shall have no arm but mine to defend her. Depart; if you desire to expose your life for friendship, go to combat the tribe of Banu-Nebhan; go to avenge my death on the family of Wezar." Amrú yields with regret; he swears to execute his will, and the two friends mingle their tears in a last embrace. Antar gives orders to prepare for his departure; the sorrowful Abla permits herself to be clothed in the weighty armour of her spouse; girt with his ponderous sword, holding in her hands his dreaded lance, she mounts on Abjar, whilst the slaves place Antar in the litter that Abla was accustomed to use in happier times.

They commenced the journey; the slaves drove the flocks and led the camels that bore the baggage; behind

them came the horsemen; the march was closed by Ablā and Antar, accompanied by the indefatigable Jerir, who went before the gallant courser Abjar *, and his nephew Khadrúf, who guided the camel that bore the litter.

Scarcely had they lost sight of the fertile banks of the Euphrates, and begun to enter upon the immensity of the desert, when they perceived at a distance, tents that seemed like obscure points in the horizon, or like a black border to the azure drapery of heaven. It was a rich and powerful tribe; the warriors who composed it equalled in number the sands of Irak, and in courage the lions of the forests. As soon as their vigilant eyes had detected the advance of the feeble caravan, three hundred of the bravest sprung upon their coursers, seized their lances, and advanced to the charge. As rapid as the fleet gazelles their steeds dashed over the intervening space, and they were soon within a bow-shot of the caravan. Then they recognized the arms and litter of the hero; "It is Antar," they cried, "yes, it is he who travels with his spouse. Behold his arms, his steed, and the magnificent litter of Ablā. Let us return to our tents, and not expose ourselves to the wrath of this invincible warrior." Already had they turned the heads of their horses, and were about to return to their tribe, when one of the party requested a moment's delay. He was an old Scheikh, whose crafty spirit penetrated into every secret, and pierced the veils of mystery. "Friends †," said he, "it is certainly the lance of Antar, his helmet, his cuirass, and his courser, whose colour is that of night; but it is neither his stature nor his fierce countenance; it is the stature and bearing of a timid woman. Believe me, Antar

* Von Hammer says the true name of this celebrated [steed] was *Ebhar*.

† *Friends*; literally, cousins or clansmen.

is dead, or else a dangerous malady hinders him from mounting his horse ; and the warrior that Abjar carries, the pretended Antar, is Ablā clothed in the arms of her spouse, to intimidate us, while the true Antar, perhaps, lies dying or dead in that litter." Struck by these remarks his companions returned, none of them, however, dared to commence the attack ; but they determined to follow the caravan at a distance, in the hope of seeing some circumstance occur which might determine their uncertainty.

The sun had now risen in his strength, and shot his fiercest rays on the sands of the desert, which glowed under their heat like the ashes of a furnace. Ablā, weak and delicate, could no longer support the weight of the ponderous lance, she allowed it to sink by her side, and its point traced a furrow in the yielding sand*. At sight of this, the horsemen, who observed all their movements, no longer doubted the reality of their suspicions ; they couched their lances, dashed their spurs into the flank of their coursers, and hasted to precipitate themselves on a troop, which they well believed was too feeble to make resistance.

The cries of his foemen, the neighing of the steeds, the voice of Ablā crying for aid, strike the ear of Antar, who was extended in the litter almost without sense or motion, and rouse him from his lethargy. Danger restores his strength ; he raises himself, shows his head, and raises a terrible cry, which carries horror into every heart. At his shout, loud as the thunder, the hair of the pursuing coursers stood erect ; they recoiled, fled, and bore over the plains their riders, chilled by the same terror as themselves, and saying to one another, "Alas ! Evil be to this day !

* Ablā is, in the original, betrayed by a different circumstance, which though more characteristic of Bedouin ingenuity, is so utterly at variance with European customs that it was necessary to change it.

Antar still lives; he designed to try the inhabitants of the desert, and prove what tribe would be bold enough to attempt the conquest of his spouse and his treasures." In vain the old Scheikh, who had already inspired them with confidence, strove once more to re-assure them. The greater part remained deaf to his voice, and continued their retreat towards their own tribe. Thirty alone consented to remain with him and to continue to watch the caravan.

In spite of his pains, which every moment became more fierce, Antar resolved to resume his armour, and remount his charger. He ordered Abla to be placed in the litter, and marched by her side. "Rest tranquil," he said, "Antar still watches over your safety, but these are the last moments that he can consecrate to your protection." Abla replied by a look full of heartfelt sorrow. "Antar," said his companions, detecting his sufferings in his attitude, "Antar, weaken not thy remaining strength, once again ascend the litter; often hast thou protected us by thy valour, to-day we will fight for thee." He replied to them, "I thank you, my friends; you are brave, but you are not Antars; advance, I hope still to conduct you safely to your tribe."

At the close of day they reached a valley not far from the place where the tribe of Banú-Abs used to encamp. It is called the vale of antelopes, and the mountains which form it allow of but one passage through a narrow glen, where scarcely three horsemen could ride abreast. Antar halted until all the flocks, and the camel bearing Abla, had gone past. When he had seen the caravan march before him, he advanced to the entrance of the defile. At that moment his pains augmented, his vitals were racked with convulsive agonies, and at each step of his courser, he felt

the most dreadful torments. At length he checked Abjar, and propping himself on his lance, remained motionless.

The thirty warriors who followed the chase, seeing him in this position, halted at the other extremity of the valley. "Antar," said they to each other, "has discovered that we are watching his march, doubtless he waits us in this defile, to destroy us in a moment. Let us take advantage of the night which now hides us under its friendly shade, to regain our tents and rejoin our brethren." "Friends," said the Scheikh to them, "listen not to the counsels of fear; the motionless state of Antar is the sleep of death. What! know you not his impetuous courage? Did Antar ever wait for the assault of an enemy? If he was alive, would he not long since have rushed upon you, like an eagle pouncing on its prey? Advance boldly, then, or if you refuse to continue your march, at least wait here until returning dawn shall dispel all doubts."

Persuaded afresh by this discourse, his companions remained, but still disquieted and alarmed, they passed the night on their steeds, without yielding to the sweets of repose. Day at length began to dawn, and dispel the shades which hid the valley. Antar was seen still at the entrance of the defile in the same attitude, and his docile courser stood motionless as the rider. At this extraordinary sight, the astonished warriors consulted together for a long time; all appearances tend to prove the death of Antar; yet no one dares to approach him, so great is the fear that he inspires. The aged Scheikh soon put an end to their irresolution; dismounting from his steed, he pricked the animal with the point of his lance, and drove him down the defile. No sooner had the steed reached the foot of the mountains than Abjar, with a loud neigh, dashed towards

him. Antar falls to the ground, like an undermined tower, and the clash of his arms echoes through the hills.

The warriors, who perceived his fall, hasted to approach. They were astonished to see extended on the earth, one who had made Arabia tremble, and they ceased not to admire his gigantic stature. Renouncing all hope of overtaking the caravan, which must, during the night, have safely reached the tribe of Banú-Abs, they contented themselves with despoiling Antar of his arms, to carry them home as a trophy. In vain they attempted to seize his gallant steed. After the death of his master, Abjar no longer found a rider worthy to press his back; more rapid than the lightning, he disappeared from their view, and hid himself in the deserts.

It is said that one of those plunderers, touched with compassion for the calamities of a hero, whom his exploits had rendered so illustrious, bedewed the corpse with tears, covered it with earth, and thus apostrophized the deceased warrior: "Honour be unto thee, gallant soldier, who during thy life hast been the defender of thy tribe, and who, even after thy death, hast protected thy followers by the terrors of thy countenance! May thy soul be blessed through eternity, may kindly dews refresh the turf beneath which you repose."

CHAPTER IV.

THE PROMULGATION OF ISLAM BY MOHAMMED.

THE biography of Mohammed is a subject of grave importance, because the incidents of his life moulded his doctrines, and there scarcely ever appeared a lawgiver whose personal character, and even personal adventures, were more deeply impressed on his political and religious system. To write a complete history of his life, would be inconsistent with our limits, and not necessary for our immediate purpose; our business is only with those incidents in his career that developed his character, and influenced his conduct; these are fortunately easy to be ascertained, for he has alluded to most of them in the Korán. The legends respecting his miraculous power, and the traditions respecting his domestic economy, we shall dismiss once for all, with the remark, that the former are contradicted by his own express declaration, and the latter possess not the slightest interest. It will also be unnecessary for us to examine the controverted points in the history of his career, because they are for the most part insignificant, and there is a sufficiency of certain facts to enable us to form a fair estimate of his motives as a reformer, his capacity as a legislator, and his claims as an inspired teacher.

Mohammed was born at Mecca, A.D. 569; he was of the family of Hashem, the most illustrious in the tribe of Koreish, and the hereditary guardians of the Kaaba. His grandfather had been governor of Mecca, when the city was attacked by the Ethiopians: the valour he displayed in repelling the enemy, gained universal applause. The

father of Mohammed died young*, leaving him only five camels and a single slave, but his grandfather took charge of the destitute child, and on his death-bed intrusted him to the care of his uncle Abu-Thaleb. The orphan was fortunate in obtaining such a guardian; Abu-Thaleb treated him as one of his own children, and gave him the ordinary education of an Arabian youth. It is probable that this included some knowledge of reading and writing, and that when Mohammed calls himself "the illiterate prophet," he does not mean that he was wholly ignorant, but that he had not devoted his time exclusively to literature. From his earliest years he displayed an intelligent and reflective mind, he loved to indulge in solitary meditation, and when his companions wished him to share in their amusements, he replied, "Man was created for a nobler purpose than indulgence in frivolous pursuits." At the age of thirteen he visited Syria in company with his uncle. The nobles of Mecca were all engaged in commerce, they transported to Damascus and other Syrian cities, the dates, perfumes, and spices of Yemen and India, exchanging them for corn, raisins, cloths, and other productions of the Eastern empire. How often these visits were repeated, it is not easy to determine†; but before Mohammed had attained the age

* We are informed, on respectable authority, that Amina, the mother of Mohammed, was a Jewess, converted to Christianity by the Syrian monk, Sergius. To her maternal instructions he is supposed to have been indebted, for his first religious impressions; and though he did not remain long under her care, yet the slight knowledge he thus obtained of pure religion, saved him from falling into the gross idolatry which prevailed in Mecca.—Von Hammer's *History of the Assassins*, chap. I.

† During these visits, Mohammed is supposed to have become acquainted with Sergius, and to have received from him instruction in the tenets then adopted by the Syrian Christians. These tenets, unfortunately, united many gross Oriental superstitions with the

of manhood, he was celebrated in Mecca for his commercial skill and enterprise. Previous to this also, he had obtained high praise for valour, in a campaign that he made under the command of Abu-Thaleb.

A rich widow, named Kadijah, employed Mohammed as her factor and agent; pleased with his conduct, she gave him her hand in marriage. The nuptials were celebrated with extraordinary magnificence, two camels were slain for the entertainment, and the slaves of Kadijah danced to the sound of timbrels for the amusement of the guests. Raised thus to the first rank in Mecca, Mohammed did not forget the kindness of his guardian, but generously took charge of some of his uncle's children, for Abu-Thaleb had recently experienced some severe reverses of fortune.

For the next fifteen years of his life we have little better than conjecture to offer. He still retained his contemplative disposition, and retired from the world one month in every year, to enjoy the luxury of meditation in the caverns of Mount Hira. Tradition obscurely hints at conversations which he had at various times with Monks and Jewish Rabbins; it would, indeed, be impossible that a person of his eminent abilities could have been indifferent to the religious discussions, which at that period shook all Western Asia. He was probably a sincere inquirer after truth, but when monastic legends were presented to him instead of the Gospel, and Talmudic tales in the place of what was spoken by the prophets, his naturally strong mind discovered that true religion must be something more pure and

simple truths of Christianity. However the truth of this tradition may be, a comparison of the Korán with the works of Ephrem Syrus, indisputably proves that it was from the Syrian Christians Mohammed obtained those childish legends which he invariably prefers to the authentic records of the Evangelists.

simple than the speculations of dreaming monastics, whether Jew or Christian. Had he enjoyed an opportunity of discovering the simple evangelical truth, abstracted from the additions made to it by human craft, or human folly, he might have received it as a solution of all his difficulties, but there is good reason to believe that he never saw the Bible in its simple purity, and was only acquainted with the forged imitations and countless perversions of the sacred text. Solitary meditation is the parent of a regulated enthusiasm; not the fierce flame which a breath can kindle, and a breath extinguish, but that sober, steady determination, which presses on to a definite object, using every means for its accomplishment that prudence or wisdom may dictate. It is not unusual for the mind in solitude to embody as it were the phantasms of imagination, and mistake its own creations for absolute existences. Inexplicable visions have appeared to men of the strongest intellect; nay, such men are peculiarly liable to these deceptions; the gigantic figure that foretold Cromwell's greatness, and the ghost of Cæsar in the tent of Brutus, were the creations of powerful intellect under high excitement. We do not, therefore, stigmatize Mohammed as a liar, for saying that the angel Gabriel commanded him to undertake the prophetic mission; it is very possible, nay, it is highly probable, that a vivid imagination imposed upon his senses, and that he really believed himself divinely commissioned*.

Mohammed first announced his commission to his wife Kadijah; she instantly declared her belief on him, saying, "I have long been persuaded that thou wouldest become the prophet of the Arabians." The next converts were Zeid, Mohammed's slave, his cousin Ali, the son of Abu-

* The history of Cromwell affords a similar instance of a clever man beginning with enthusiasm, and ending with imposture.

Thaleb; Abu-Bekr, a man of considerable influence with the Koreish; Othman, and several other persons of distinction. To all these he gave the name of Mussulmans, that is, "persons wholly resigned to the will of God." Devotees making similar professions have never been wanting in the East; the Jews had their Essenes, the Christians their Monks, the Persians their recluse Magi, and the Brahmins and Buddhists a countless variety of ascetic sects. The ambition of Mohammed was at first limited to the establishment of an order or sect; it was directed by circumstances to the foundation of an empire. To fix the faith of his followers, he pretended to have frequent revelations from heaven; and here we begin to find imposture mingling with his enthusiasm; he declared that he was himself unable to read, but that the messages from heaven were read to him by the angel Gabriel, in order that he might recite them to his secretaries. Such was the first origin of the Korán, a word which signifies, "that which ought to be read." A more particular account of this extraordinary book will be found in another chapter.

For some time the new doctrines were propagated in secret; three years elapsed before Mohammed ventured to propound them to his own family; he prepared a feast, to which he invited his uncles and his other relatives, but an accident broke up the assembly before he could find an opportunity of addressing them. On a second occasion he was more fortunate; the guests, in number about forty, expressed an anxiety to hear his statement, and Mohammed eagerly embraced the opportunity. His speech, if we may believe the traditions respecting it, was admirably calculated to make a deep impression; he exposed the follies of idolatry with severe ridicule, asking what reliance could be placed on senseless images, whose eyes saw not, and whose

ears heard not? In solemn language he announced the truth of the Divine Unity, and called on them to worship the one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the moral Governor of the universe, who hath prepared a recompense in a future life for the evil and the good. Finally, in a spirited peroration, he exclaimed, "Is there one among you who wishes to be my vizier and lieutenant, as Aaron was to Moses?" The young Ali responded to the call, and Mohammed declared him for the future invested with vicarial authority. Of the other guests some believed; but others mocked, saying to Abu-Thaleb, "Hereafter you must be obedient to your son."

Having thus made a commencement, Mohammed began to preach publicly in Mecca, and daily added to the number of his disciples. The Koreish soon took the alarm; they dreaded the loss which their temple would experience, if idolatry fell into disrepute, and, after trying remonstrance in vain, they began to persecute the new sect. Protected by powerful friends, and by his connexion with the ruling family of the Hashemites, Mohammed was enabled to defy his enemies, but many of his followers, less fortunate, were forced to fly, and seek a refuge in Abyssinia. In spite of persecution, however, the new religion spread, and, among others, Mohammed added to his proselytes his uncle Hamza, and the celebrated Omar. But these advantages were counterbalanced by the death of his uncle Abu-Thaleb, who, though he had never become a convert, had always protected his nephew from the violence of the Koreish. In consequence of this, Mohammed sought refuge in the town of Tayef, three days' journey from Mecca.

The reasons that induced him to choose this place of retreat are supposed to have been the influence his uncle possessed in that city, and the high character for valour

enjoyed by its inhabitants. He hoped, by converting the people of Tayef, to gain the means of taking vengeance on his countrymen in Mecca. But his expectations were disappointed; a Tayefite, to whom he spoke of his pretensions, replied, "If you are the envoy of God, you need no allies; if you are an impostor, you are unworthy of an answer." Similar sentiments were expressed by others, and Mohammed returned home disappointed. For some time he lived in retirement, apparently yielding to the storm, but really waiting for an opportunity to exert himself with advantage.

The sacred month, in which the caravans of pilgrims came to Mecca, was, like the period called "The Truce of God," in the Middle Ages, a season of universal peace. The most ferocious robbers respected this consecrated time; while it lasted, hereditary animosities were laid aside, and crowds fearlessly came from every quarter to celebrate the annual jubilee in the national temple. Mohammed announced his mission to the strangers, and recited to them some portions of the Korán: "I am," said he, "the Apostle of God; the book that I read to you is the proof of my mission. The Lord commands you to reject what is unworthy of Him, and to serve Him alone. It is his will that you should believe on me, and serve me as his prophet." These declarations, delivered with energy, and supported by the poetic style of the Korán, produced a deep impression on the minds of his hearers; but especially on the pilgrims from Yatreb, or, as it is now generally called, Medina, whom accidental circumstances had prepared for some such announcement.

Yatreb was occupied by two tribes, one of idolatrous Arabs, and one of Jews. A fierce war arose between the rival races; it terminated in the conquest of the Jews, who were reduced to slavery. Amid their sufferings they were

frequently heard to exclaim, "Oh ! if the appointed time of the Messiah had arrived, we would seek him, and he would deliver us from this tyranny." When the Medinese pilgrims heard the account of the new prophet at Mecca, they said to one another, "Can this be the Messiah of whom the Jews are constantly speaking? Let us find him out, and gain him over to our interests." Mohammed at once saw what an advantage he had gained by such a prepossession ; he declared that he was the person whom the Jews expected, but that his mission was not confined to a single people, for all who believed in God and his prophet should share its advantages*.

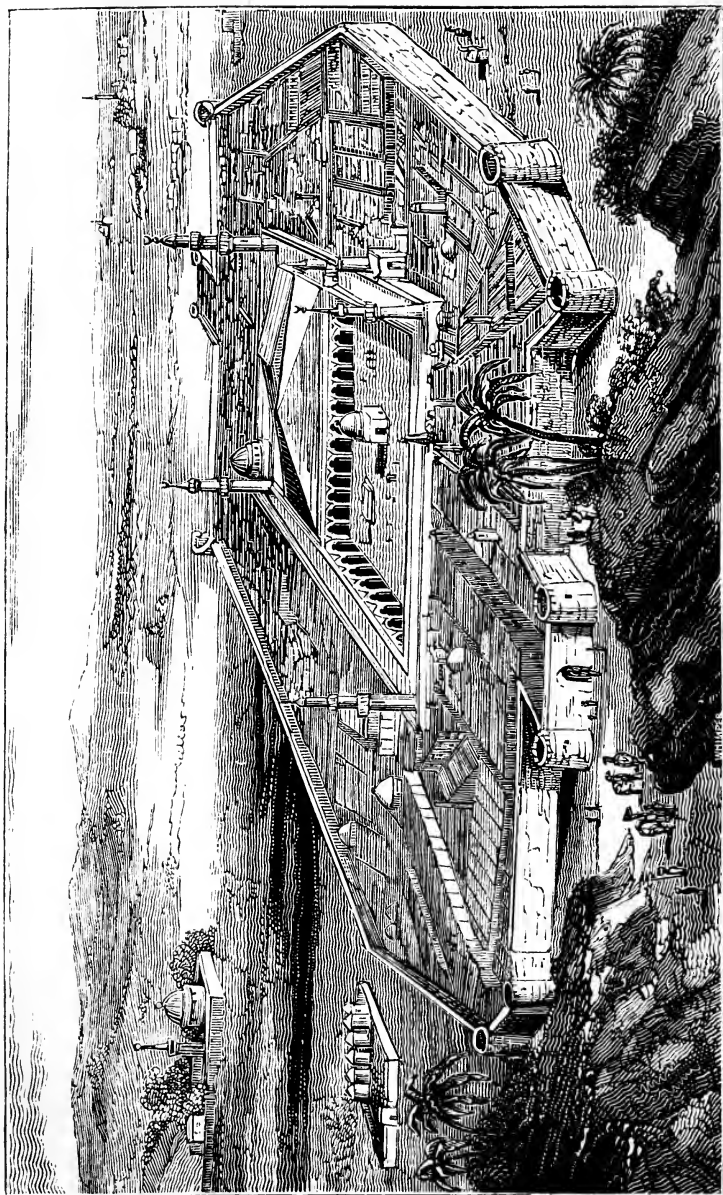
The Medinese pilgrims, on their return home, became zealous preachers of Islám ; it was a recommendation of the new religion, that it was unpopular at Mecca ; for commercial jealousy had excited a bitter spirit of rivalry between the two cities. Mohammed, conscious of the vast accession of strength he had received, made now a decisive advance in imposture, and published the narrative, at once ludicrously absurd and daringly blasphemous, of his journey to the highest heavens in company with the angel Gabriel†, and his personal interview with God. Several of his disciples were shocked by this monstrous tale, and probably the whole system of Mohammedanism would have

* This anecdote, which appears here for the first time in the English language, was extracted from the chronicle of Thabari, by M. Reinaud. It throws a new and important light on the character and career of Mohammed. Abulfeda says that some of the Medinese Jews believed on him ; the reader will remember that Cromwell, whose character is so very similar to that of Mohammed, is said to have been mistaken for the promised Messiah by some of his Jewish contemporaries.

† See an abstract of his extraordinary narrative in *Readings in Biography*.

fallen to pieces on the instant, had not Abu-Bekr, with ready zeal, attested by oath the veracity of the prophet.

This is the critical period in the life of Mohammed, when his enthusiasm began to degenerate into downright imposture ; we can distinctly trace in the Korán the utter change which success wrought in his character. He had first preached patience and forbearance, in terms not unworthy of a true Christian: " Pardon your enemies," he said, " until God cometh with his commandment ;" but when assured of support at Medina, he declared, " Permission is granted unto those who take arms against the unbelievers, for that they have been unjustly persecuted by them : and God is certainly able to assist them." The permission of defensive warfare, when his power was still further strengthened, was changed into an exhortation, or rather command, to propagate the new religion by force of arms. " Thus God propoundeth unto men their examples. When ye encounter the unbelievers, strike off their heads, until ye have made a great slaughter among them ; and bind them in bonds : and either give them a free dismissal afterwards, or exact a ransom, until the war shall have laid down its arms. This shall ye do. Verily, if God pleased, He could take vengeance on them without your assistance ; but He commandeth you to fight his battles, that He may prove the one of you by the other. And as to those who fight in defence of God's true religion, God will not suffer their works to perish : He will guide them and dispose their hearts aright ; and He will lead them into paradise of which he hath told them. O true believers, if ye assist God, by fighting for his religion, He will assist you against your enemies, and will set your feet fast ; but as for the infidels, let them perish ; and their works shall God render vain." Up to the moment that the Medinese asked the question,



THE CITY OF MEDINA.

“Art thou the Messiah?” it is possible that Mohammed might have been an honest reformer, and animated by the noblest motives. But his first step in imposture was fatal in its consequences : it tainted at once, and for ever, his entire system.

When the magistrates of Mecca learned the great addition of strength that the new religion had received, they were filled with terror, and to free themselves from danger, resolved on the death of the innovator. But Mohammed had anticipated the crisis. He had lost his wife Kadijah, and most of his children, some time before, and there was no tie that bound him to Mecca. Having secretly sent off his favourite disciples to Medina, he took the same road himself, and escaped in safety from the vigorous pursuit of the Koreish. This event is called the Hégira, or “flight,” and has been ever since used as an epoch by the Mohammedans. It took place A.D. 622, when Mohammed was about fifty-three years of age, thirteen years after his announcing himself as a prophet, during the reign of Heraclius in Constantinople, and Khosrou Parvis in Persia.

Mohammed was received enthusiastically at Medina; the greater part of the inhabitants made profession of Islám, and changed the name of their city from Yatreb to Medinet-al-Nabi, which signifies “the city of the prophet.” The new religion had been hitherto purely doctrinal, but now that it had obtained an establishment, forms of worship were devised, practical observances instituted, and the first mosque erected. A struggling religion is usually tolerant; Mohammed at first permitted free exercise of their religion both to the Jews and the idolatrous Arabs, nor did he begin to persecute until he despaired of their conversion.

The exiles from Mecca formed themselves into a band

of freebooters; nor did their prophet deem it inconsistent with the sanctity of his character, to take the command in several plundering expeditions. Success crowned their efforts; recruits crowded from all quarters to join his banners; if victorious, his soldiers were enriched; if they fell, they believed that their souls were instantly received into paradise; there could scarcely be a creed devised, more likely to attract proselytes. So strong was the desire of plunder, or thirst of vengeance, in the mind of the exiles, that they disregarded the sanctity of the sacred month, and plundered the caravans that were journeying to Mecca. Mohammed excused them by declaring that the Meccans had forfeited all claim to protection, since they had opposed the commands of God, and driven his prophet from their walls.

Fame spread abroad the intelligence of a rich caravan returning from Syria, for whose protection the Meccans had sent an escort of nine hundred and fifty chosen men; Mohammed resolved to attack it, though he had only three hundred and thirteen followers, of whom but two were mounted. He took post near the well of Bedr, on the Meccan road, not far from the Red Sea; and soon saw the caravan approaching. A fierce engagement ensued, in which the Mohammedans were on the point of being routed, when their leader, feigning to be inspired by the angel Gabriel, mounted his horse, and flinging a handful of sand toward his enemies, exclaimed, "May their faces be confounded." This simple incident decided the fate of the day; the Meccans took to flight, and the Mohammedans gained a rich booty. Henceforth, they believed themselves invincible, especially as Mohammed declared that their success was owing to a miracle; "Ye slew not," he said, "those who were slain at Bedr, but God slew them. Nei-

ther didst thou, O Mohammed, cast the gravel into their eyes when thou didst seem to cast it; but God cast it, that He might prove the true believers by a gracious trial from himself; for God heareth and knoweth." But on this occasion, he was guilty of a still more atrocious imposture; he declared that God was wroth with him for allowing the captives to be ransomed, instead of having them put to death as the sanguinary Omar had proposed; among those prisoners, were the prophet's uncle Abbas, and his cousin Okail. A third pretended revelation regulated the distribution of the plunder; one fifth was set apart for religious uses, one fifth was given to the poor, and to the widows and children of those who had fallen in battle; the rest was distributed to the army, a horseman receiving double the portion of a foot soldier. Strengthened by this victory, Mohammed ventured to lay aside his pretended toleration; he banished the Jews from Medina, and caused one of them, who had been remarkable for his hostility to the new faith, to be assassinated.

In the following year, the Meccans assembled a large army to revenge the disgrace and loss of Bedr. They gave the command of it to Abu-Sofián, whose son Moawiyah, was afterwards Caliph; among the inferior officers was the gallant Khaled, destined, at no distant period, to be the most zealous propagator of Islámism. The hostile armies met at Ohod, a mountain near Medina; at first, the Mussulmans were victorious, but rushing forward in disorderly pursuit, they were suddenly charged by the Meccan horse, and thrown into remediless confusion. Mohammed was thrown from his horse, and severely hurt; his uncle Hamza was slain; Abu-Bekr and Omar were grievously wounded. The Meccans remained masters of the field, and disgraced themselves by brutally mutilating the dead.

It is said, that the wife of Abu-Sofián having recognised the corpse of Hamza, threw herself upon it like a fury, cut off the ears and nose to ornament her dress, and tore his heart with her teeth.

✓ Mohammed had the same resource in prosperous or adverse fortune, a new revelation; indeed, all the chapters of the Koran revealed at Medina, bear the mark and impress of imposture, for they are clearly devised to meet the circumstances of the time. On this occasion, he declared that God had given them the victory, but afterwards deprived them of it as a punishment for their avarice. Thus he expresses himself, "God had already made good unto you his promise, when ye destroyed them by his permission, until ye became faint-hearted, and disputed concerning the command of the apostle, and were rebellious; after God had shown you what ye desired. Some of you chose this present world, and others the world to come. * * * * Verily, they among you who turned their backs on the day whereon the two armies met each other at Ohod, Satan caused them to slip, by inspiring them with a passion for plunder: but now God hath forgiven them, for God is gracious and merciful." As the Meccans did not follow up their advantages, Mohammed asserted that God had confounded their devices, and saved his elect from the dangers with which they had been threatened. The two parties continued their reciprocal aggressions with unabated fury; as Mohammed and his followers were engaged in commercial pursuits, they suffered as well as the merchants of Mecca; indeed, the historians assure us, that the state of the whole Arabic peninsula, at this period, was the most horrible that could be conceived; whole tribes devoting themselves to robbery and murder. Even the women were conspicuous in these enterprises; one female, who pos-

possessed a strong castle in the north of Arabia, had plundered many caravans, and slain the merchants; at length her fortress was stormed, she became a prisoner, and was sentenced to be torn in pieces by wild camels.

Mohammed waged war not only on the Meccans, but on the Jewish tribes near Medina; the latter, having suffered very severely, applied for aid to Mecca, and having received a mighty auxiliary force, they advanced against their common enemy, declaring that they would discharge their arrows in concert, as if from one bow, at the great disturber of Arabia. Warned by the calamity of Ohod, Mohammed did not venture to meet his enemies in the field; he fortified Medina with a deep trench, whence this is called "the War of the Ditch," and allowed the allies to pillage the open country. He has given us in the Korán, a curious account of the alarm which prevailed in Medina at this period. "O true believers, remember the favour of God towards you, when armies of infidels came against you. * * *. When they came against you, from above you, and from below you, and when your sight became troubled, and your hearts came even to your throats for fear, and ye imagined of God, various imaginations. There were the faithful tried, and made to tremble with a violent trembling. And when the hypocrites, and those in whose heart was an infirmity, said, God and his prophet have made you no other than a fallacious promise. And when a party of them said, O inhabitants of Yatreb, there is no place of security for you here, wherefore return home. * * *. They had before made a covenant with God, that they would not turn their backs; and the performance of their covenant with God, shall be examined into hereafter." The besiegers made several attempts to storm Medina, which were defeated; discord soon rose in their ranks, a fierce

wind overthrew their tents, and at the end of about twenty days, they broke up their encampment, and returned to their several homes.

Liberated from danger, the first thought of the Mussulmans was vengeance; they were particularly enraged against a Jewish tribe, called, "the sons of Koreidha," and on them fell the first brunt of the new war. The Jews were besieged in their strong-hold for twenty-five days, at the end of which time they surrendered, trusting that Moádh, a gallant Moslem leader, their ancient friend, would intercede with Mohammed for their pardon. But Moádh had been severely wounded in the War of the Ditch, and from that time had invariably added to his evening prayer, "O God, grant me, before I die, the pleasure of beholding the blood of the Koradhites!" When he learned that the fate of the Jews was placed at his disposal, he caused himself to be conveyed to the camp, and pronounced as sentence, that all the men should be put to death, and the women and children sold as slaves. Mohammed was so delighted with this ferocious decree, that he exclaimed, "Behold, a celestial decision, a decision which comes from the seventh heaven!" and gave orders that it should be instantly executed. The booty taken on this occasion was immense; the portion which the prophet reserved for himself, was the arms and military stores. He thus describes the result of the expedition: "God cast into their hearts terror and dismay; a part of them ye slew, and a part ye made captives, and God hath caused you to inherit their land, and their houses, and their wealth, and a land on which ye have not trodden, for God is Almighty." One Jew, named Salam, particularly obnoxious to Mohammed, still survived; but the pretended prophet sent five of his emissaries, who introduced themselves into Salam's

house as guests, and murdered him at his own table. This base violation of the laws of hospitality, nowhere so much respected as in Arabia, filled the minds of Mohammed's opponents with terror, and from this time few were found who dared openly to resist his will. Nor was this the only example Mohammed exhibited of the evil effects which increase of power had produced on his character; he began now to give the reins to his depraved passions, and to claim for himself an exemption from the moral laws that he had promulgated. He had a great number of wives, and he frequently made fresh espousals, but not satisfied with such indulgence, he became enamoured of Zeináb, the wife of Zeid, his faithful freedmen. Zeid, having heard the circumstance, divorced Zeináb, but as the Arabians regarded marriages with the wives of freedmen, or adopted children, as a species of incest, Mohammed for some time hesitated to indulge his inclinations. At length he publicly married Zeináb, and with shameless blasphemy brought forward a new revelation to justify his crime. "No crime," said he, "is to be charged on the prophet as to what God hath allowed him, conformable to the ordinance of God, with regard to those who preceded him (for the command of God is a determinate decree), who brought the messages of God, and feared him, and feared none besides God."

The armies of the Mussulmans were now spread over Arabia, they were to be seen on the shores of the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf; some even had made incursions into Syria. Mohammed believed that he had sufficient strength to attempt the conquest of his native city, and advanced towards Mecca at the head of a powerful army. The Meccans prepared for a desperate resistance, but fortunately terms of accommodation were proposed, which prevented the effusion of blood. It was agreed that Moham-

med should retire for the present, but with permission to visit his birth-place in the following year, and that in the mean time his disciples should have permission to perform their pilgrimages to the Kaaba, on condition of bringing no warlike weapon but their swords.

On his return to Medina, Mohammed believed himself entitled to hold intercourse with the greatest potentates of the East; he, therefore, sent ambassadors to the emperors of Persia and Constantinople, and to the king of Ethiopia, inviting them to embrace his doctrines. The letter sent to the Persian despot commenced thus, "Mohammed, the son of Abd-Allah, the apostle of God, to Khosrou, monarch of Persia, greeting;" when it had been read thus far, in the presence of Khosrou Parvis, he seized the letter, and tore it in pieces, exclaiming against the insolence of an unknown man, who dared to put his own name before that of a mighty monarch. When Mohammed was told of the manner in which the letter was treated, he exclaimed, "Thus may God tear his kingdom!" an expression to which subsequent events gave the credit of a prophecy. Heraclius treated the message with more respect, but contented himself with sending a civil reply; the king of Ethiopia is said to have expressed some anxiety to become a convert.

Determined to complete the extirpation of the Jews, whom Mohammed had long regarded as his most inveterate enemies, he led his army against the mountain-fortress of Khaibar, where the Jews, driven from Medina, had found refuge. The resistance was such as might be expected from men hopeless of mercy, but the desperate valour of Ali bore down all opposition, and the fortress was taken by storm. Immense treasures rewarded the conquerors of Khaibar; but Mohammed personally had little reason to rejoice in his success, for poison was administered to him by one of

the female captives, from the effects of which he never completely recovered.

On the return of the army to Medina, Mohammed showed another example of daring blasphemy, by inventing a pretended revelation to excuse his crimes. His lustful excesses became known to his wives, whose complaints created general scandal. Mohammed asserted, that the following words came down to him from heaven, "O prophet, why holdest thou that prohibited which God hath allowed thee, seeking to please thy wives; since God is inclined to forgive, and merciful?" He also declared, that the following divine message was sent to his wives, "O wives of the prophet, if ye join against him, verily God is his patron; and Gabriel and the good men among the faithful, and the angels also, are his assistants. If he divorce you, his Lord can easily give him in exchange, other wives better than you, women resigned unto God, true believers, devout, penitent, obedient."

At length the period arrived for Mohammed's return to Mecca; his march thither resembled a triumphal procession, the numerous hosts of converts accompanied him, with glittering arms and banners displayed; he was himself mounted on a superb camel, decorated with rich housing, while one of his officers proclaimed before him; "Give way, give way, ye children of the infidels; the prophet has come to triumph over you; with a blow of his mace he will dash you to pieces!" Those of the Meccans who had been remarkable for their hostility to the Mussulmans, either shut themselves up in their houses, or fled to the mountains; the young and the ambitious hastened to join the religion which they saw was destined to triumph: and among the converts were Amru, the future conqueror of Egypt, and

Kháled, to whose fiery valour was owing the defeat of the Mohammedans at Ohod. Having performed his pilgrimage, Mohammed prepared to take vengeance for the death of one of his ambassadors, who had been slain on the road to Bosrah, by the Greek governor of Muta, a town towards the south of the Red Sea. The command of the army was given to Zeid, with the following directions: "If you are slain, the command will pass to Jaafar, the son of Abu-Thaleb; should Jaafar fall, he shall be replaced by Abd-Allah, the son of Kawáh; but if Abd-Allah perish, the soldiers shall name their chief." In the first engagement at Muta, the three generals thus named, were slain; Kháled was then unanimously called by the soldiers to take the lead, and his judicious measures ensured them a decisive victory. Mohammed rewarded Kháled with the title of "the Sword of God;" he honoured the remains of the fallen with a magnificent funeral, and showed especial regret for the loss of the faithful Zeid.

The peace between Mohammed and the Meccans proved, as might have been expected, nothing better than a hollow truce; both parties speedily prepared for war, but the Meccans soon saw that effective resistance was hopeless. Khaled entered the city at the head of his troops, and punished a slight opposition by an indiscriminate massacre. This unnecessary bloodshed grieved Mohammed; when he arrived at his native city, he limited his vengeance to the punishment of about a dozen persons, who had been the chief cause of his long exile. He made his entry into Mecca, as a pilgrim rather than a conqueror, reciting a chapter which he pretended had been revealed long before: "Verily we have granted thee a manifest victory, that God may forgive thee thy preceding and thy subsequent sin,

and may complete his favour on thee, and direct thee in the right way, and that God may assist thee with a glorious assistance*." His first care was to destroy all the idols of the Kaaba; accompanied by his followers, he entered the temple, and laying his hand on each image in succession, said, "Truth has come, let falsehood disappear," on which the idol was broken to pieces.

Having purified the Kaaba, Mohammed resolved to extirpate idolatry in the neighbouring districts, but encountered a fiercer opposition than he had anticipated. At the battle of Honein his forces were on the brink of utter ruin, and were only saved by the impetuosity of the enemy, who broke their ranks to urge forward the pursuit, and thus exposed themselves to an attack in flank, from some troops that Abbas, the uncle of the prophet, had rallied. At this critical moment Mohammed had recourse to the expedient which proved so successful at Bedr; he flung a handful of sand towards the hostile lines, exclaiming, "May their faces be covered with confusion!" and then urged his followers to charge; this movement was decisive, the idolaters were completely defeated. Mohammed, as was his custom, declared that their success was miraculous, and thus speaks of it, in the last of his pretended revelations; "Now hath God assisted you in many engagements, and particularly at the battle of Honein; when ye pleased yourselves in your multitudes, but it was no manner of advantage unto you, and the earth became too strait for you, notwithstanding it was spacious; then did ye retreat and turn your backs. Afterwards God sent down his security upon his apostle, and upon the faithful, and sent down troops of angels, which ye saw not; and He punished the

* This passage is still frequently inscribed on the standards of the Mussulmans.

unbelievers." The Mussulmans followed up their success by laying siege to Tayef, but the city was obstinately defended, and after remaining twenty days before its walls, they were forced to retire.

With part of the immense booty taken in this expedition, Mohammed purchased new allies among the Arabs, who still preserved some inclination for idolatry. The favour he showed the new converts, offended the Ansarians, or "Defenders," as those were called who had joined him at Medina; but, having heard of their complaints, he addressed to them an affectionate remonstrance, which he concluded with the prayer, "May God have mercy on the Ansarians, and the sons of the Ansarians;" the Medinese at these words shouted for joy, and returned to their tents more devoted to the prophet than ever.

From Mecca Mohammed returned to Medina, where he was received with transports of joy, the more especially as the Medinese had dreaded that he would take up his residence in his native city. Ambassadors came from every part of Arabia to felicitate him on his victories, whole tribes became converts to his doctrines, and he found himself sufficiently strong to carry his arms beyond the peninsula. The power of the Persians was broken down; the provinces of Arabia which had been tributary to them and the Abyssinians, had recovered their independence; but the Greeks, or as they are more frequently called, the Romans of the Eastern empire, were formidable foes. Mohammed had learned, that the Byzantine court, jealous of his rising greatness, was preparing to attack him, and he took the daring resolution of instantly commencing the war. Having levied an immense army, he marched to the borders of Syria, but meeting with no enemy he came back to complete the extirpation of idolatry in Arabia. In the full

consciousness of power, he proclaimed, that all who did not forsake their idols and embrace Islám within four months, should be exterminated; he even inserted the persecuting edict in the Korán. "A declaration from God and his apostle to the people, on the day of the greater pilgrimage, that God is clear of the idolaters, and his apostle also.

* * * When the months, wherein ye are not allowed to attack them, shall be passed, kill the idolaters, wheresoever ye shall find them, and take them prisoners, and besiege them, and lay wait for them in every convenient place. But if they shall repent and observe the appointed times of prayer, and pay the legal alms, dismiss them freely, for God is gracious and merciful." The time had now arrived for the pilgrimage to Mecca, the last in which Mohammed was destined to bear a part; as if with some presentiment of approaching dissolution, he took every care to make this the most splendid ceremonial that had ever been witnessed in Mecca. A brief outline of the forms he observed on this occasion, deserves to be given, for they are the rules by which pilgrims to Mecca are at this day guided. On his arrival at Mecca, he purified himself by bathing, and then proceeding to the temple, kissed the black stone, which is supposed to contain the covenant between God and man. He then made the circuit of the Kaaba seven times, running round it thrice, and four times marching with a grave and measured pace. Leaving the town, he then proceeded to the hill of Safa, and facing the Kaaba, he exclaimed, "God is great, there is no God but God; He hath no companions; to Him belong might and majesty; praised be his holy name! There is no God but God." He repeated the same prayer at the hill of Merva, and the other sacred stations; after which he declared that he received from heaven his last revelation, "This day have I perfected your religion for you, and

completed my mercy upon you, and I have chosen Islám to be your religion." He then sacrificed sixty-three camels, one for each year of his age, and liberated the same number of slaves. During this visit he revived the old Arabic method of computation by lunar years, abolishing the intercalation by which the Koreish had endeavoured to adapt the solar to the lunar year; and he declared, that unbelievers should no longer be protected by the sanctity of the sacred months*. He enforced both these changes by a pretended revelation, saying in the Korán, "Moreover the complete number of months with God is twelve months, which were ordained in the book of God, on the day whereon he created the heavens and the earth. * * * This is the right religion, therefore deal not unjustly with yourselves therein, but attack the idolaters in all the months, as they attack you in all, and know that God is with them that fear Him."

On his return to Medina, Mohammed was seized with a disease, which he feared would be dangerous, if not mortal; even under the pressure of sickness he was not regardless of the craft, which mingles so strangely with enthusiasm and insanity, rendering it an insuperable difficulty, in the tangled web of human motives, to discover where delusion ends, and imposture begins. Assembling his wives together, he requested that Ayesha, on whose prudence he could rely, should be his only attendant during his sickness, for he feared that in some paroxysm of disease he might make some indiscreet avowal, fatal to his pretensions. Though the violence of the fever daily increased, he did not for a moment lose sight of his political interests; at

* With similar perversity the Russian clergy declared that Peter the Great's attempt to introduce the Gregorian calendar was a daring impiety.

this time, his attention was engaged by two impostors, who had appeared in Arabia, and like him claimed to be prophets. Of these, the one named Moseilama, appeared in the province of Yamáma, where also in a later age the sect of the Wahabees originated; the other, called Aswad, resided in Yemen, or Arabia Felix. Aswad was assassinated shortly before the prophet's death, and Moseilama did not long survive him.

Notwithstanding the severity of his illness, Mohammed preserved the consistency of his character; "No prophet before me," said he to his friends, "has suffered what I suffer; but the more bitter is my pain, the greater will be my reward hereafter." And at another time he said, "The Lord gives his servants the choice of two worlds; I have chosen that which is to come." While his strength permitted, he insisted on performing the ceremonies of public worship in the mosque; at the conclusion of the prayers, he addressed the congregation in the following terms, "Men and brethren, if I have caused any of you to be struck unjustly, here is my back, let him retaliate; if I have slandered any one, let him now assail my reputation; if I have wronged any one, behold my purse." One of the congregation claimed an old debt of three drachmas, which Mohammed instantly paid, saying, "I would rather blush in this world, than in that which is to come." He then gave liberty to all his slaves, and proceeded to urge his last recommendations on his followers. He insisted, principally, on three particulars, the abolition of idolatry in Arabia, the ready reception of proselytes, and the steady observance of prayer at the stated time. He concluded by pronouncing a bitter curse upon the Jews, probably, because he attributed his illness to the poison that had been administered to him at Khaibar by the captive Jewess.

When the symptoms of dissolution began to appear, he ordered his family to be assembled round his bed, to hear his final directions respecting his funeral; "When I am dead," said he, "and my body has been washed and shrouded, you will place my corpse at the verge of the tomb, until Gabriel and the other angels of God come to pray for my repose. You shall then approach one by one, and pray that God may be gracious to my departed spirit, and afterwards you may admit the people. My peace I bestow upon all here present, and I charge you to give it in my name to those who are absent; I take you, also, to witness that I bequeath my benediction to all those who shall follow me in the true faith, henceforth and for ever."

Soon after this, when several of his friends were together in his apartment, he demanded pen and ink, for the purpose of writing a new Korán. The proposal gave rise to a scene of unseemly contention, some insisting that his desires should be gratified, others asserting that the Korán they had already was sufficient. With some difficulty the room was cleared, and no strangers were again admitted. On the day of his death, he bathed his hands in water, exclaiming, "O God, fortify my soul against the terrors of death." Soon after, he became quite faint. His last feeble words were "O God — yes — with my fellow citizen on high," a name he frequently gave to the angel Gabriel. Mohammed died on the 8th of June, A.D. 632, at the age of sixty-three years, during the last twenty-three of which, he had assumed the character of a prophet.

The following is the traditionary account of the circumstances of Mohammed's death, received as authentic by orthodox Mussulmans. "When his majesty (Mohammed) was ill, the archangel Gabriel came to him and said, 'Verily, God hath sent me to you, to honour and venerate

you; and this is especially for you; God asks you about the thing which He knows better than you, and says, How do you feel yourself?' His majesty said, 'O Gabriel, I feel myself sorrowful and sad.' After that, Gabriel came a second time, and said the same as on the first; and his majesty answered him as before. After that he came a third day, and said as on the first and second; and his majesty gave the like answer; and there was an angel along with him called Ismaïl, who commands one hundred thousand angels, and every one of them commands one hundred thousand more. And Ismaïl asked permission to come to his majesty; and his majesty asked Gabriel about him, who said, 'This is such and such an angel.' After that, Gabriel said, 'The angel of death, Azrael, asks leave to come to you, and he never asked leave to come to any man before you, nor will he to any one after you.' Then his majesty said, 'Give him leave.' Then the angel of death came in, and made a salâm to his majesty, and then said, 'Verily, God hath sent me to you, O Mohammed! and if you order me, I shall take your pure soul, but if you order me to let it alone, I will do so.' Then his majesty said, 'Do you take my soul, O angel of death?' He said, 'Yes, I have been ordered to do so, and also to obey you.' Then his majesty looked at Gabriel, who said, 'O Mohammed! verily, God is desirous of meeting you.' Then the prophet said to the angel of death, 'Do what you have been ordered.' Then the angel took his soul.—And when his majesty died, an order of patience came: the companions heard a voice from the corner of the house, saying, 'Peace be with you, O people of the house of the prophet, and the compassion and blessing of God; verily, having hope in God's rewards, and bearing patiently every misfortune and loss, is beneficial to you; then put faith in

God, and no other, and hope from Him, and no other ; and only the despairer of the rewards is unfortunate.' Then Ali-Zain said, 'Do ye know who that man is? he is Kedher.'—(See page 28*.)

The news of his death filled Medina with confusion ; many, but especially Omar, declared that he still lived, and Abu-Bekr had some difficulty to calm the tumult by reading those passages of the Korán in which the prophet asserted his mortality. Three days elapsed before Abu-Bekr was appointed his successor, with the title of Khaliph, or vicar. The body was then prepared for interment in the manner that he had himself directed. After which his grave was dug, under the bed where he expired. After some years a mosque was erected over the spot, to which pious Mussulmans still perform pilgrimage. The absurd tale of his body having been placed in an iron coffin, and held suspended in the air by magnetic influence, is a mere falsehood ; but we have vainly endeavoured to trace its parentage.

We have thus given a sketch of the career of this extraordinary man ; we have trusted chiefly to the authority of those Mussulmans who had the best opportunity of knowing the truth†, and we have paid particular attention to the Korán, which may be regarded in some degree as a piece of autobiography. It seems to us, after long and serious consideration, that the original intentions of Mohammed were good ; his first object was to substitute a

* See the *Mischcat-ul-Más'abih*, vol. ii., 738.

† Tabari and Abulfeda are the best Oriental authorities ; use has also been made of the great collection of traditions, called *Mischcat-ul-Más'abih*, we have also consulted the lives of Mohammed, by Prideaux, Gagnier, and Reinaud, and Von Hammer's articles in *Les Mines de l'Orient*.

pure religion for the idolatry that prevailed in Mecca, and with this was probably mingled the meaner, but still the not unworthy design, of uniting the Arabian tribes into one people, and establishing the independence of the peninsula. His first step in imposture was probably what is mischievously termed "a pious fraud," but success led him to repeat the artifice, and he soon learned to place his chief reliance on deception. Yet the consciousness of original good intentions seems never to have deserted him; the hour of death would have shaken one who was wholly an impostor, we have seen that Mohammed met it with courage and confidence. The leading doctrines of Islám were arranged before the flight from Mecca, the subsequent additions made to them at Medina were corruptions of their purity. The union of fanaticism and cunning is by no means rare; but when they meet in the same individual, they are so closely intertwined, that the best mental analyst is unable to separate them. Who, indeed, can accurately determine the composition of the mixed motives that influence his own actions?

To the character of Mohammed as a legislator and conqueror, it may be interesting to add some few traits of his private life and conversation. His person was well formed, his aspect commanding, and his port that of one who knew himself to be capable of great things. His temper was well regulated, his manners affable, and his general conversation full of point. Though usually grave, he frequently condescended to jest both with his disciples and those whom he casually met. One day an old woman asked him to ensure her admission to Paradise; he replied, "Paradise was not made for old women," but, seeing that she wept, he added, "God, before their admission, will restore to the aged youth and beauty."

So great was his liberality to the poor, that he frequently left his household unprovided ; nor did he content himself with relieving their wants, he entered into conversation with them, and expressed a warm sympathy for their sufferings, which is to the wretched a boon frequently more grateful than charitable relief. In the domestic circle he was deservedly beloved ; Zeid, while yet a slave, refused to receive freedom, if it would have the effect of separating him from so indulgent a master. He was a firm friend and a faithful ally ; his soldiers were enthusiastic in their attachment to his person, the Medinese regarded him as second only to the Divinity.

We have now to contemplate the dark side of the picture ; he was the slave of licentious passions, which seemed to strengthen with his age ; notwithstanding the number of his wives and concubines, he was intensely jealous, and even devised a revelation, forbidding intrusions on his privacy ; nay, his jealousy passed the bounds of mortal fate, for the Korán expressly prohibits his wives from marrying after his decease. Vindictive as the Arabs are, Mohammed's vengeful spirit could scarcely be paralleled in the peninsula ; he never forgave an offence, unless when the indulgence of revenge would have been impolitic. Once an Arab, who had incurred his displeasure, knelt before him, entreating pardon : Mohammed remained silent, hoping that his attendants would, by a speedy assassination of the suppliant, save him from the shame of a refusal. None of them stirred, and the man was dismissed in safety. After his departure, Mohammed reproved them for not having slain one whose pardon was not granted on the instant : they answered that he had made no sign, to which he angrily replied, " It should not be necessary for a prophet to make a sign."

The eloquence of Mohammed, judging from the fragments preserved by tradition, and most chapters of the Korán, was manly and energetic, mingled with no small share of a poetical spirit*. We regard his asserted want of education as very dubious; it served his purpose to attribute his knowledge of reading and writing to a miracle, but without some portion of these qualifications, he could scarcely have succeeded as a merchant in Syria; or have been chosen as a factor by Khadijah. He was gifted with a powerful memory, he possessed taste superior to that of his times, he had improved his mind by foreign travel, and there is no improbability in the supposition, that part of his time in the caves of Mount Hira was devoted to literary studies. He seems to have had little regard for consistency, and changed or modified his institutions without scruple. Thus, in the beginning of his career, hoping to gain the Jews, he had adopted several Jewish ceremonies, which he subsequently changed, when he found that people obstinately attached to the creed of their fathers. In these matters, he followed no other guide than his interests and his passions. Hence the Mussulman doctors of law are careful to note in the Korán, the precepts that have been abrogated.

Yet, though the failings of Mohammed were notorious, his disciples, who absolutely witnessed them, and his followers, who find them recorded in the Korán, firmly believe in his impeccability. Men have in all ages been found, who adhered to inconsistent dogmas; those who believe at once the innocence of Mohammed, and the traditions that assert his guilt, only afford a new example of the aberrations to which the mind is subject, when once it quits the safe anchorage of revealed truth.

* See Appendix, on the Korán.

The followers of Mohammed attribute to him the power of working miracles, notwithstanding his express declaration to the contrary; of these they enumerate several thousands, but only four derive any support from the Korán; these are the night-journey to heaven, the angelic auxiliaries at the battles of Bedr and Honein, and the cleaving of the moon asunder*.

The very defects, however, in the character of Mohammed, were probably among the causes of his success in his age and nation; his enthusiastic countrymen were ever ready to adopt religious innovations, and time has not changed their dispositions. It is notorious, that the Wahabees encountered little or no resistance from the Mussulmans of Arabia, and that without the interference of the Turks, Islamism would have been annihilated in the very country that was the cradle of its glory.

* The tradition respecting this miracle is founded on the following verse of the Korán: "The hour of judgment approacheth, and the moon hath been split in sunder." Ebn Masúd affirmed that this miracle was literally performed, and that he saw Mount Hará interposed between the two sections. A very childish version of the tale is given by Gagnier and repeated by Crichton; in which, among other absurdities, it is mentioned, that the moon went up one of Mohammed's sleeves, and came down the other. The most approved commentators say, that the preterite is here, according to a well-known Oriental idiom, used for the future; and that this is a prediction of the signs that shall precede the resurrection. Some authors believe that Mohammed took advantage of an eclipse, and pretended that the moon was darkened by his miraculous powers.]

CHAPTER V.

THE MOHAMMEDAN CREED; FROM AN ORIGINAL
ARABIC CONFESSION OF FAITH.

THE Creed of which the following is a translation, was originally compiled by a Mohammedan doctor of the law, who belonged to the Sonnite sect, and contains a summary of the doctrines generally received by orthodox Mussulmans; it was published in 1705, by Adrian Reland, with a Latin translation, unfortunately too literal for general use, and from the Latin it was translated into English and French. Hottinger, who edited the Creed in Hebrew characters, declared that there were in it, "precepts, Ethical, Political, and Domestic, worthy of Christianity itself." The brevity of this creed, renders it necessary to add notes, explaining more fully the different articles, more especially those which are founded on the orthodox traditions, and the authoritative commentaries on the Korán.

IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE MOST MERCIFUL.—Praise be unto God, who has led us unto the Faith¹, and has

¹ *Imán*, faith, was declared by Mohammed, to be the key of Paradise. The following definition of *Imán* is given in the *Mischcat-ul-Más'abih*, or great collection of traditions, respecting the actions and sayings of Mohammed. "Moadh-ebn-Jabal, asked the prophet of the most excellent *Imán*; he said, To love him who loves God, and hate him who hates God, and to keep your tongue employed in repeating the name of God.—What else, O Prophet? he said, To do unto all men what you would wish to have done unto you, and to reject for others what you would reject for yourself."—*Mischcat-ul-Más'abih*, vol. i. 17.

appointed it as a signet² by which is obtained the entrance of the celestial paradise; and as a veil between us and eternal dwelling in flames³. And may the favour and praise of God be upon Mohammed, the best of men, the Guide⁴, who leads his followers into the right way—favour, perpetual and ever-increasing, from generation to generation.

² The word more usually signifies “a dowry;” and in that sense the meaning of the passage would be, that by faith we bind to us the “Maids of Paradise,” an Eastern personification of celestial pleasures. But as the signet is, in the East, a well-known symbol of royal favour, we have adopted it as the preferable signification.

³ Abú-Horeira (a companion of Mohammed, whose name, signifying *the father of a cat*, was given him from his attachment to that animal,) reports the following tradition. “The prophet said, Verily, a dead body sits up in its grave without fear or noise, after which it is asked its religion in the world; it will reply, ‘I was in Islám.’—‘And what dost thou say concerning Mohammed?’—It will say, ‘He is the messenger of God, who brought wonders to us from God, and I consider him a teller of truth.’—‘And didst thou see God?’—It will say, ‘It is not possible for any man to see God.’ Then an opening will be made for it towards hell, to see some tearing others to pieces in flames; then it will be told, ‘Look towards that from which God hath guarded thee:’ after which an opening will be made for it towards Paradise, and it will see its beauties and pleasures, and it will be told, ‘This is the place of thy abode, because thou livedst in the truth, and diedst in it, and God will raise thee up in it!’ And a bad man will sit in his grave in lamentation and wailing. Then he will be asked, ‘What he did?’ he will say, ‘I know not.’—‘But what dost thou say concerning Mohammed?’—He will say, ‘I heard something about him.’ For him then will be opened a crevice towards Paradise, and he will look at its beauties, and will be told, ‘Look at those things which are withheld from thee; then a hole will be opened for him towards hell, and he will see its wailing and gnashing of teeth, and will be told, ‘This is thy abode, because thou livedst in doubt, and will be raised up in doubt, God willing.’”—*Mischcat-ul-Más’abih*, vol. i. 43.

⁴ This epithet was first bestowed upon Mohammed by Abu-Bekr; the fourth convert to the faith of the prophet.

Here begins the description of Faith and its explanation. Know that Faith is the foundation of Islamism⁵, as the prophet Mohammed has pronounced, to whom may God be kind, and grant plenary salvation. Islamism rests on five foundations; of which the first is the Confession of God, that there is no other God beside him, and that Mohammed is his delegated prophet⁶; the second is, the

⁵ *Islām*, means, as has been mentioned before, “resignation to the will of God,” or, “a state of salvation;” but the former is the meaning recognised by the majority of the Mohammedan writers. It is divided into two parts, theoretical, and practical. The former consists of, 1st, belief in God; 2nd, his angels; 3rd, in his scripture; 4th, in his prophets; 5th, in the resurrection; and 6th, in predestination. The four points of practice, 1st, prayers and purifications; 2nd, alms; 3rd, fasting; and 4th, the pilgrimage to Mecca.

⁶ Allusion is made to the passages in the Bible, which were quoted by Mohammed as predictions of his mission. Moses says, “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me, unto him shall you hearken.”—*Deut.* xviii. 15. The prophet here foretold, must, say the Mussulmans, have descended from Ishmael, the brother of Isaac; an interpretation that need not be refuted. A more celebrated misapplication of Scripture is, his claim to be recognised as the Comforter, promised by Jesus Christ; the Islamite doctors assert, that the Christians have here wilfully perverted the text, and substituted παρακλητος, a Comforter, for the word περικλυτος, most famous; which has the same signification as the name Mohammed. This is absurdly false; the name פרקליט or פרקליש, a Paraclete, was familiar to the Jews, and adopted into their language from the time that Palestine became subject to the Seleucidæ, and was used in a forensic sense, to signify the person who pleaded in defence of a criminal, before a public tribunal. In this sense it is used, 1 John ii. 1; “If any man sin, we have an advocate (παρακλητον) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” Nor was this the only forensic term which the Jews derived from the Greeks in the age of the Seleucidæ; we find also in the Targumists and Talmudists, the word קטיוא an accuser, from the Greek κατηγορος.

offering up of prayer⁷ at stated periods; the third, the bestowing of alms; the fourth, fasting during the month Ramadan; and the fifth, is the pilgrimage to Mecca, which every person possessing the power is bound to perform. But this is the confession which we call Faith.

Be it known, that every person possessing capacity for it⁸, is bound to believe in God—in his angels—in his books—in his prophets—in the last day, and in the absolute decree and pre-determination of the Most Highest, respecting both good and evil.

But Faith consists in this, that every man is persuaded in his soul of the truth of these things, and Confession is the proof of this belief by external indications.

OF FAITH IN GOD.

FAITH in God, is the real belief in the soul, and confession by the tongue, that God⁹ is a supreme existence, true, per-

It was long disputed among the learned, why the great Persian heresiarch assumed the name of Mani or Manes, and why his followers asserted, that this name proved him to be the promised Comforter. Archbishop Usher has completely explained both difficulties, though the circumstance seems not to be generally known; he has shown that Mani in Persian, and Manes in Greek, is precisely the same as the Hebrew Menahem, or rather Menachem (מנחם), "a Comforter." This also explains the reason why the Manichees rejected the Acts of the Apostles; the account of the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, completely destroyed the pretensions of Mani to be the promised Paraclete, or Comforter.

⁷ This includes washing and purification.

⁸ "Abú-Horeira says, that the prophet of God said, 'I swear by God, that my soul is in his hands; whoever hath heard of my prophecy without believing in my religion, and hath died, will be among the companions of the fire, (devils and condemned spirits,) although he shall have been a Jew or a Christian.'"—*Mischcat-ul-Más'abih*, vol. i. 3.

⁹ The Mohammedan commentators on the Korán enumerate

manent¹⁰, a very essence, eternal, without beginning and without end, who has no form¹¹ or figure, is limited by no place, has no equal, compeer, or similarity, no motion or change; no separation, division, weariness, or casualty. He is removed from conjunction with any other being, self-existent, intelligent, potent, of independent volition, hearing all our words, seeing all our deeds, the source of speech, the maker, the creator, the sustainer, the producer, the author of life and death¹²; giving a beginning to all things, causing to all a resurrection; judging, decreeing, correcting, ruling, prohibiting, directing to rectitude and leading to error; a retributive judge, rewarding, punishing, merciful, victorious.

And these attributes are eternally inherent in his essence throughout all ages, without separation or change; and these attributes are not **HE**, nor yet are they different from him. And thus every attribute is conjoined with him, as life with knowledge, or knowledge with power¹³.

ninety names of God, divided into three classes; the first relates to his essence, the second to his dignity, and the third to his attributes.

¹⁰ "Abú-Horeira said, that the prophet of God related these words of God. 'The sons of Adam vex me and abuse time; whereas I am time itself, in my hands are all events, I have made the day and the night.'"—*Mischeat-ul-Más'abih*, vol. i. 9.

¹¹ The attributes of God are divided by the Shiites into affirmative and negative, which they always carefully distinguish; the Sunnites are less careful in this particular.

¹² The use of formative letters to express those shades of meaning in verbs, for which the Western languages use qualifying adverbs, renders it difficult to translate these epithets without weakening their force by a paraphrase.

¹³ It is rather curious to find an Arabian writer, who never heard of Lord Bacon, assuming the celebrated Baconian aphorism that "knowledge is power," as an illustration.

But these are the attributes¹⁴, life, knowledge, power, will, hearing, sight, the power of communication¹⁵, eternity both as regards a beginning and an end, action, creation, support, production, formation, the gift of life, the message of death, the first origin of things, their restoration, wisdom, predestination, direction to good, seduction to evil¹⁶, retribution, reward, punishment, grace and victory.

And with these noble and precious attributes, God, the Most Highest, is endowed; and whoever denies any of these attributes, or doubts concerning them, or any of them, is doubtlessly an infidel.

Preserve us, O God, from the sin of infidelity!

OF ANGELS.

FOR a right belief concerning angels, there is required a persuasion of the mind and confession of the tongue, that there exist servants to the supreme God, who are called Angels or messengers, free from sin, near to God, who perform all his commands, and are never disobedient. But they have pure and subtile bodies, created of fire; neither is there among them any difference of sexes, or carnal appetites, and they have neither father nor mother. Also they

¹⁴ The Mussulman rosary consists of ninety-nine small and one large bead; with each of the ninety-nine an attribute of deity is recited, and with the last, the word "Allah," God. The nine first versicles may serve as a specimen: 1, Gracious; 2, Merciful; 3, King; 4, Holy; 5, Saviour; 6, Protector; 7, Defender; 8, August; 9, Absolute Sovereign, &c.—*Hidayút-úl-Islám*, Calcutta, 1804.

¹⁵ Literally "language," but the Arabic word includes revelation and every other mode of communicating intelligence.

¹⁶ The eighty-ninth and ninetieth versicles of the Mohammedan Rosary are, 89, "O thou who avertest evil;" 90, "O thou who permittest evil to come."—*Hid. -úl-Islám*.

are endowed with different forms, and severally preside over ministrations. Some stand, some incline downwards, some sit, or adore with a lowered forehead; others sing hymns and praises of God, or laud and extol their Creator, or ask pardon for human offences¹⁷. Some of them record the deeds of men, and guard over the human race; others support the throne of God, or go about it, and perform other works which are pleasing to the Deity.

But it is necessary to believe in them, although a person may not know their names or specific attributes¹⁸; and to embrace them in love, is one of the necessary conditions of faith. And to hate them collectively or individually, is an act of infidelity.

But if any one confesses that angels exist, but asserts that they have sexual differences, it is an act of infidelity. Or if he confesses that there are angels, and that they have no sexual differences, but declares that he does not repose trust in them, or love them, he is to be esteemed an infidel.

Preserve us, O God, from the sin of infidelity!

OF THE DIVINE BOOKS.

FAITH in the books of God is this, that we are persuaded in our mind, and confess with our tongue, that those illus-

¹⁷ Hence the angels are sometimes collectively named intercessors.

¹⁸ The following are the principal allusions made to angels in the Korán: "God maketh the angels his messengers, furnished with two, three, or four pairs of wings:"—chap. xxxv. "The angels who are in the presence of God, do not insolently disdain his service, neither are they tired therewith. They praise him night and day: they faint not:"—chap. xxi. "Each man hath angels mutually succeeding each other, before him and behind him; they watch him by the command of God:"—chap. xiii. "Every soul hath a guardian set over it:"—chap. lxxxvi.

trious books are from God, which he sent down from heaven to his prophet ; which demission was made without creation¹⁹, (the Korán is) eternal²⁰, without production. In them are contained the commands and prohibitions of God—his edicts—his promises, and his threatenings—his declaration of what is lawful, and what is unlawful—the distinction between obedience and rebellion—and his in-

¹⁹ Abú-Horeira said, "I heard from the prophet, verily God disclosed the chapters entitled T. H. (the 20th), and Y. S. (the 36th), before creating the regions and the earth by one thousand years ; and when the angels heard them, they said, 'Happy be the tribe to which the Korán shall be sent down, and happy be the tongues which speak it.'"—*Mischcat*, &c., vol. i. 507. It is remarkable that neither in the Korán itself, nor in the authentic traditions, can we find any allusion made to its eternity. This article of faith was probably derived from the Jews, many of whose rabbins have asserted the eternal existence of the Pentateuch.—*Rab. Coll.* vi. 71.

²⁰ Whether the Korán was created or eternal, continues to be still a fierce subject of contention among the Mohammedan theologians. For asserting the former opinion, the Caliph Vathek was stigmatized as an infidel, and sentenced to unenviable immortality, both in the East and West, as the worst of tyrants and sinners. Abou Yacoub relates a curious account of a public controversy on the subject between Shafai, the poet and theologian, and Hafs, a sectarian preacher at Bagdad. Hafs asserted that the Korán was created at the moment of its revelation. Shafai quoted the verse, "God said *be*, and it was," and asked, "did not God create all things by the word *be*?" Hafs assented.—"If then the Korán was created, must not the word *be* have been created with it?" Hafs could not deny so plain a proposition. "Then," said Shafai, "all things, according to you, were created by a created being, which is a gross inconsistency and manifest impiety." Hafs was reduced to silence, and such an effect had Shafai's logic on the audience, that they put Hafs to death as a pestilent heretic.

Shafai was the founder of one of the four orthodox sects, and was so celebrated by the Sonnites, that his presence was said to be "like the sun to the world, or health to the body."

formation of his retributive justice, both as regards rewards and punishments. All these books are the very word of God, the Most Highest, which is read by the tongue, guarded in the volumes, and written in the hearts, of men. But this Word of God is distinct from those letters and vocal sounds, and yet these letters and vocal sounds are metaphorically called the Word of God, because they indicate God's real word. In the same way that we call our expressions—our words, because they indicate what is truly our word. As the poet says :

Our real language dwells within our breasts,
The tongue is but an index to the heart.

These things God well knows.

The books are one hundred and four in number ; of which God, the Most Highest, sent down ten to Adam²¹—fifty to Seth²²—thirty to Idris²³—ten to Abraham—one to

²¹ Some Western writers, and, among others, the celebrated Orientalist, Hottinger, have stated the number revealed to Adam as twenty-one. The mistake has arisen from one of the Arabic traditions, stating that twenty-one leaves or tablets were, at the beginning, revealed to Adam, from which the first of the ten books was formed.

²² Seth is a favourite hero in the theological romances of the Orientals ;

“The tablets that of old

By Seth were from the Deluge saved,”

have been mentioned by Christian writers, and both the Syrians and Curds pretend to have copies of his revelations. Some of the more modern Moslemite doctors understand by the word books, communications made to Seth by the Deity, which were not committed to writing ; but the more orthodox declare it would be absurd to suppose that the name of books would be given to unwritten revelations.

²³ Edris, or Idris, is one of the Mohammedan appellations of the prophet Enoch ; it is derived from a word signifying intelligence or study, according to some, because he was the first natural philosopher, according to others, because he was an excellent tailor, and

Moses, which is the תורה *Thorah*, (Law) or Pentateuch²⁴; one to Issa, (Jesus,) which is the Engil, (Evangelium, or Gospel;) one to David, and this is the book of Psalms; and one to Mohammed²⁵, which is the Forkán²⁶ (*Korán*).

could make a coat in a day! The elements of all the physical sciences were said to be contained in the revelations made to him, and by the ordinary corruptions of tradition he is supposed to have been the first author of astrology, geomancy, and other magical arts. He is a favourite hero with the writers of romance, who describe him as the first author of religious wars, and the first who inculcated the duty of persecuting infidels.—See Chap. I.

²⁴ The Mohammedans, however, deny that the Pentateuch, or Gospels, as we have them, are genuine; but assert that they have been grossly corrupted by the Jews and Christians. Of these corruptions they assign several specific instances; the passage in the Psalms, “Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee,” should be, according to them, “Thou art my prophet, this day have I instructed thee.” It is easy to see that these allegations were afterthoughts devised by the later Mohammedan doctors, when pressed too hard by the advocates of Christianity. It is curious that Ben Batrik declares that Saint Mark’s Gospel was originally written in Latin, and Saint Matthew’s in Hebrew. The Greek version of the former he attributes to Saint Peter, and of the latter to Saint John.

²⁵ The following, according to tradition, is the account Mohammed gave of the manner in which revelations were made to him. “Jabir said, I heard his majesty (Mohammed) relating the commencement of the instructions from above, saying, ‘Whilst I was walking along, I heard a voice from heaven, and raised up my eyes; and behold, I saw the angel, who had come to me at the mountain of Hira, sitting upon a throne between the heavens and the earth; and I feared him, so that I fell upon the ground. Then I went home and said, Wrap me in a cloth, wrap me in a cloth: and wrap me up. Then God sent this revelation, O thou wrapped up, arise (*Korán* lxxiii.), and invite men to Islám, and make them fear God’s punishment, and know that your Lord is great, and clean your garments of filth, and abandon idolatry. Then, afterwards, the other instructions came in succession.’”—*Mischcat*, vol. ii. p. 680.

²⁶ *Forkán*, that is “the discernor,” or “distinguisher” between

He who denies these volumes, or doubts concerning them, or a part of them, or a chapter, or a versicle, or a word of them²⁷, is certainly an infidel.

Preserve us, O God, from the sin of infidelity.

CONCERNING THE AMBASSADORS OF GOD.

FAITH in the ambassadors of God demands that we recognise in the heart, and confess with the tongue, that God, the Most Highest, has appointed prophets—ambassadors

truth and falsehood, justice and injustice. This name is said to have been given to the Korán by Abú-Bekr. He also named it *Moshaf*, "The Book." The modern Mohammedans usually name it *Kelam Scherif*, "the noble word," or *Ketab Aziz*, "the precious volume." When they make a quotation from it they simply put, "God said," in a different character, and never mention the chapter or verse where the passage is found.

²⁷ The reverence of the Mohammedans for the Korán may well put Christians to the blush; on this subject, Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali makes the following judicious observations: "Out of reverence for God's holy name, always expressed in their letters, (and for fear that any passage quoted from the Korán might be desecrated,) written paper, to be destroyed, is first torn, and then washed in water, before the whole is scattered abroad; they would think it a sinful act to burn a piece of paper on which the Holy Name, or a passage from the Korán, has been inscribed. How often have I reflected, whilst observing this praiseworthy feature in the character of a comparatively unenlightened population, on the little respect paid to the Sacred Writings amongst a people who have had greater opportunities of acquiring wisdom and knowledge."—*Mussulmans of India*, vol. ii.

There are many traditions relating to the value of the Korán, and the respect with which it should be treated, such as, that it should never be held below the girdle, that it should be read with a modulated voice, &c. "Ebn-Omar adds, 'I heard his majesty forbid travelling with the Korán, lest it should be carried to the land of the enemies of religion, who might treat it with contempt, and destroy it.'"—*Mischcat-ul-Más'abih*, vol. i. 517.

chosen from among men, and sent as messengers to men—preachers of eternal truth, to whom implicit faith and confidence is due, who command and forbid certain things (as they are inspired), and bear to men the revealed edicts of the Deity, and make manifest to them his constitutions and decrees—the appointments He has made, and the rules He requires to be observed; and reveal to men things hidden from the powers of their natural understandings; as the nature or essence of the Divinity—the attributes—the works and operations of God—the resurrection²⁸ and

²⁸ The traditions respecting the signs which Mohammed declared should precede the resurrection, vary very much. One declares him to have said, “The resurrection will not take place until you shall see ten tokens; the first, smoke (or a dense mist), which will fill the East and West, and remain forty days; the second, *DAJAL*, (Antichrist); the third, a beast which will come out of the mountain of *Sáfah*; the fourth, the rising of the sun in the West; the fifth, the coming down of Jesus, the son of Mary; the sixth, the coming of Gog and *MAGOG*; the seventh, a sinking of the earth in the East; the eighth, another in the West; the ninth, another in the land of Arabia; the tenth, a fire which will come out of the land of Yemen, which will drive man towards a land, in which will be the rising of the dead.”—*Mischcat*, ii. 562.

It appears that the fourth sign was that which the followers of Mohammed found it most difficult to conceive; they sought additional information on the subject, and received in reply the most singular lecture on astronomy that has ever been recorded. He said, “When the sun rises, he goes to prostrate himself under God’s imperial throne, and then asks permission to go to the East, which is given to him, and he is ordered to go to the East and rise. And the time approaches when the sun will prostrate, but it will not be approved, and he will ask leave to go and rise in the East, but it will not be granted, and it will be said to him, ‘Return to the place from whence you came; as you came from the West, so also return to it, and rise there.’”—*Mischcat. Ibid* . . . The traditions about *Dajál* (Antichrist), are very numerous. Mohammed thus described his personal appearance: “Verily he is of low stature, although bulky; and has

revivification of the dead—the punishment of the sepul-

splay feet, and is blind, with his flesh even on one side of his face, without the mark of an eye, and his other eye is neither full, nor sunk into his head. Then if you should have a doubt about Dajál, know that verily your cherisher (God) is not blind.”—*Mischcat*, vol. ii, 571. The following explanation is given of the other principal signs of the resurrection. “Dajál will come to a tribe, and call them to him, and they will believe in him; and Dajál will order the sky, and rain will fall; and he will order the earth, and it will produce verdure; and in the evening their cattle will come to them with higher lumps upon their backs than they went out in the morning, and their udders will be large, and their flanks shall be full. After that Dajál will go to another tribe, and call them, and they will refuse, and he will withhold rain from their verdure and cultivation; and they will suffer a famine, and possess nothing And whilst Dajál will be about these things, on a sudden God will send Jesus, son of Mary, and he will come down on a white tower, on the east of Damascus; clothed in robes coloured with red flowers, resting the palms of his hands upon the wings of two angels; and every infidel will die, who shall be breathed upon by the Messiah, and the breath of Jesus will reach as far as eye can see. And Jesus will seek for Dajál until he finds him at a door in a village called Lúd (in Palestine), and will kill him. Then a tribe will come to Jesus whom God shall have preserved from the evils of Dajál, and he will comfort them, and will inform them of the degrees of eminence they will meet with in paradise. And God will send Gog and Magog, and they will pass lightly over every land, high or low; and those who shall come before them will pass over the lake of Tiberias, and will drink all the water in it. And Jesus and his friends will be forbidden to descend from the mountain of Túr (Sinai, whither God had commanded them to retire), until the head of one bullock will be worth more to them than a hundred *dinárs* is to you this day. And Jesus and his friends will pray for the destruction of Gog and Magog, and God will send insects into their necks, and they will die at once. Then Jesus and his companions will come down upon the earth, and they will not find a spot of ground unpolluted by the carcasses of the wicked; but God will send birds with necks like the camels of Khorassán, who shall destroy them. And the Mussulmans will burn fires of the bows, and arrows, and quiver, of Gog and Magog, for seven years.

chre²⁹, and the interrogation, and the examination, and

After that, God will send rains over towns and forests, and the earth will be washed as if swept. After that, it will be said to the earth, 'Bring your fruit.' And in those days, from ten to forty persons shall eat of one pomegranate, and find shelter under its rind; and in those days there will be abundance of milk, so that the milk of one camel will fill a company of men, and the milk of a cow will fill a tribe, and the milk of a goat will be sufficient for several people. And whilst this is doing, God will send an odoriferous gale, which will take them under its arm, and will take the soul of every *Momin* (true believer), and the bad people will remain, who breed enmity in the earth, like asses fighting together, and on these people the resurrection will come to pass."—*Mischcat*, vol. ii. 567. The singular tradition of Christ's personal reign on earth, his conquest over Gog and Magog, and the glories of the Millennium, were borrowed from the Syrian Christians, whose speculations on these subjects were equally numerous and absurd.—See *Ephrem Syrus*; and LEE's edition of *Martyn's Controversy*.

²⁹ When a corpse is laid in the grave, the Mohammedans believe that an angel gives notice of it to the two examiners, Monker and Nakir; terrific angels of livid and gloomy appearance, whose duty it is to inquire into the life and actions of the deceased. They order the dead person to sit upright, and if he obeys not instantly, they drag him up with an iron hook; and as these examiners are not supposed to be very patient, the Mohammedans have their graves made hollow, in order that they may be able to sit up without difficulty. The angels rigidly question the corpse respecting its faith: if he answers satisfactorily, they suffer him to be refreshed with the breezes of paradise; but if not, they beat him on the temples with maces of iron, and pull him about with the iron hook or scythe, until he roars so loud as to be heard by all the universe except men and gins (genii). They then thrust him back into the grave, giving him as companions ninety-nine dragons, with seven heads each, who gnaw his carcass until the day of judgment.

This extraordinary article of faith is not directly mentioned in the Korán, and is therefore rejected by the sect of the Motazalites, who adhere strictly to the text. But as a distinct allusion is made to the subject, it is received by the majority of the Mohammedans.

In the Magian religion, from which this doctrine appears to be

the scale and balance³⁰, and the bridge³¹ or road that

borrowed, the examination takes place at a later period; and the examiners, Mithra and Rashné-râst, wait until the souls present themselves on the bridge that separates earth from heaven.—See the *Zend-Avesta*.

The Jews have a similar belief, probably also derived from the Magians during the Babylonish captivity, and they call the examination **חבוט הקבר** *Chibbut Hakkeber*, the beating of the sepulchre.

³⁰ This is an article common to the Magian, Mohammedan, and Rabbinical creeds. It was manifestly at first a sublime allegory, which tradition explained literally. The Mohammedans say that each of the scales will be sufficiently large to contain the universe and that the balance will be held by the angel Gabriel. The books, in which the good and bad actions of a man's life are severally recorded, will be weighed, and the examination will be so nice, that the weight of a hair will turn the scale.

³¹ The bridge of Al Sirât, say the Mohammedans, leads from earth to heaven, but passes over the very centre of hell; it is finer than a hair, and sharper than a razor's edge; it is beset on both sides with briars and thorns. Over it the righteous shall pass rapidly and without impediment, but the wicked shall be hurled into the burning lake which roars beneath them. How the righteous are to be sustained, and what shall be the means of precipitating the wicked, is, however, yet, matter of dispute.

We find this dogma noticed, rather obscurely, in the Rabbinical writings; but it forms an essential doctrine of the Magian religion. According to the Magian belief, the examiners appointed by God to investigate men's actions, stand in the midst of the *Pul Tchinevad* (straight bridge), and the souls enter upon it one by one. Superior Intelligences, called Izeeds, will accompany the righteous over the dangerous pass and prevent them from tripping; but the wicked, left to themselves, shall become giddy and terrified, and topple headlong from the steep. After the resurrection is completed, and the last judgment concluded, this bridge shall be destroyed, and no future connexion exist between the eternal delights of heaven, and the anxieties of a transitory world.—See the *Zend-Avesta*.

It must be confessed that the Magian description is at once the

must be trodden by all on the last day, and the fish-pool³², and paradise with its delights³³, and hell with its punish-

most complete and beautiful; but this is not the only poetical imagination of the ancient Persians that Mohammed has injured by transfusing it into the Korán.

³² The pond, or fish-pool, is designed to refresh the righteous after they have passed the bridge Al Sirát. It is described as an exact square, of a month's journey in compass. Its water is supplied by two pipes from Cawthar or Cautser, one of the rivers of paradise, is whiter than milk or silver, more odoriferous than musk; the pebbles over which it rolls are diamonds and rubies, its sands are seed-pearls. Around it are as many cups as there are stars in the firmament, and whosoever tastes of its streams shall never thirst again.

Some of the modern Moslemites consider this account of the pond is allegorical.

³³ It is a dispute among the Mohammedans whether paradise be now in existence, or is as yet uncreate. The more orthodox, however, adopt the former opinion. The voluptuous descriptions of the sensual pleasures to be enjoyed by the faithful, are the great stain of the Korán; still they are tame, compared with the extravagant account of the commentators, who, like the Jewish Rabbins, give the amplest reins to imagination whenever they can obtain an opportunity. We must not, however, suppose that the Mohammedans believe sensual pleasures to be the only or even the chief delights of heaven; these, they assert, will arise from the fruition of the Divine presence, and a share in the illuminating influence of the Eternal; and the eight degrees of beatitude that they describe, are measured by the proximity of the soul to the Deity.

The commentators who dwell on the sensual delights of paradise, confound the future residence of the blessed not only with the garden of Eden, but with the garden of Irám, planted by the impious Schedad, who endeavoured to pass himself off as a deity, and introduced some of his disciples to the garden, which he had prepared with all possible luxuries, under the pretence of giving them a foretaste of the joys of heaven.

It is a common, but erroneous, tradition, that Mohammed excluded females from paradise; there is no better authority for it, than an indifferent jest attributed to the prophet: an aged woman

ments³⁴. But the prophets are free from errors and great

having plagued him on the subject of paradise, he said that she had no concern with the matter, for no old woman would be admitted into it; but seeing that she was grieved by this announcement, he said that all the old women would be restored to youth before their admission into the regions of bliss.

D'Herbelot attributes the plan of the Mohammedan paradise to the heresiarch Cerinthus, who was cotemporary with the apostle John. But the speculations of the Magians, and the insane conjectures of the Rabbins, were the probable source of this, as well as the many other corruptions that polluted the Eastern churches.

³⁴ The Korán and the commentators are very precise in their delineations of the geography of hell, which they call by its Hebrew name Gehennom. They divide it into seven portions, but do not agree as to the inhabitants of the several districts. The most common opinion respecting them, is, that—

The first portion, properly called Gehennom, is destined for those worshippers of the true God who have not acted up to the principles of the faith they professed.

The second, called the Lodhà, is for the Christians.

The third, named Hothama, is for Jews.

The fourth, denominated Sâir, is destined for the Sabians.

The fifth, called Sacar, is for the Magians or Ghebirs.

The sixth, named Gehim, will contain Pagans or Idolaters.

And the seventh, the severest place of punishment, in the lowest depths of the abyss, is named Hooviat, and reserved for the hypocritical professors of religion.

A guard of nineteen angels keep watch over each of these apartments, to whom the damned will confess the justice of their punishment, and entreat them to intercede with God for some alleviation of their grievous torments, or for utter annihilation.

Instead of the seven districts, one commentator more rationally says, that hell has seven gates, by which he allegorically intimates the seven following sins: 1st, avarice; 2nd, gluttony; 3rd, hatred; 4th, envy; 5th, anger; 6th, luxury; and 7th, pride. Another says, these gates are seven members by which men commit sin. And, in allusion to this opinion, a Persian poet says, "You have the seven gates of hell in your body; but the intelligent soul can place locks upon them all. The key of those locks is your own free will, which

sins, and all believe in the same creed, which is Islámism³⁵, and the Mohammedan faith, although they were different institutions. They are also elected from created beings—honoured by personal communication with God, and by descent of angels to them; supported by manifest miracles, which are contrary to the ordinary course of nature, as

is ever in your own power: be cautious to guard these portals carefully, lest they be opened to your own destruction.”

The chief punishment of the damned, according to the Imám Caschiri, will be their banishment from the presence of God, and the thick veil that will impede their fruition of the beatific vision reserved for the righteous. But few commentators imitate this modest caution; they seem absolutely to revel in the description of every species of torment that a perverted imagination can suggest. And the traditions of the Magians and Talmudists supply them with ample stores to supersede the necessity of invention.

The Mohammedans, like the Jews and Romanists, believe that the punishment of those in the district of Gehennom will not be eternal, but that, after their crimes are expiated by purgatorial flames, they will be admitted into paradise.

Between paradise and hell, the Mohammedans place a district called Orf, or more commonly in its plural form Araf, a word which signifies *a distinction*. According to some, the separation is made by a veil; according to others, it is a very thick and strong wall; notwithstanding this impediment, not only can the inhabitants of al-Araf see and converse with the residents of hell and heaven: but the blessed and the damned can behold and converse with each other.

There is a great controversy respecting the inhabitants of al-Araf. Some believe that this is the chosen residence of the patriarchs, the prophets, and the martyrs, together with troops of angels in human form. But others assert it to be a species of purgatory, designed for those whose good and bad actions are so equally balanced that neither preponderate. After the day of judgment, however, they believe that the residents of al-Araf will be admitted into paradise.

³⁵ The Korán, in numberless passages, declares that the creeds of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, were the same with that of Mohammed. In the second surat or chapter of the Korán, Abra-

that some brought back the dead to life³⁶, spoke with beasts³⁷ and trees³⁸, and other inanimate beings—and other miracles of a similar nature³⁹; to which degree of Divine

ham is declared not to have been a Jew or Christian, but a genuine Moslem.

³⁶ Some of the Arabic legends respecting the miracles of their prophets are very extravagant. Dulkephel is said to have restored twenty thousand persons to life at one time. To the three persons recorded to have been raised from the dead by Jesus Christ, they add Shem, the son of Noah, who, they say, mistook the call of our Lord for the angelic summons to judgment, and came out of the grave with his head half gray. After thus showing his obedience, he immediately died again.

³⁷ Soleman Ben Daoud (Solomon the son of David), is said to have understood the language of animals, and to have conversed with them very frequently. In most of the Oriental traditions respecting speaking animals, we find birds the principal actors. In the list of prodigies recorded in the Khaliphate of Motawakkel, we find a bird larger than a raven, appearing in Yemen, and pronouncing in the presence of the multitude, forty times, "Serve and fear God, God, God." In Khúzistán, also, a bird perched on the bier of a pious man, as he was being borne to the grave, and pronounced the following words in the dialect of the country: "May the Omnipotent God grant mercy to this dead person, and to those who are assisting in his funeral."

³⁸ Among the miracles traditionally attributed to Mohammed, are, that the rocks paid him homage, and that the trees came to meet him. From the apocryphal "Gospel of the Infancy," the Mohammedans have derived several miracles of the same kind which they attribute to Christ; and it is worthy of remark, that these same miracles are related in the *תולדות ישו* "Generations of Jesus," a Jewish libel on the history of our Lord.

³⁹ Though Mohammed in the Korán expressly disclaims the power of working miracles, yet he claims the merit of having caused the moon to appear divided, and of having procured supernatural aid for his followers on more than one occasion. The traditions ascribe to him an infinite number of miracles, most of which are the most childish than can be conceived. Take the following as a specimen. "When his majesty (Mohammed) was repeating the Khútbah (an

eminence none but God's prophets can attain⁴⁰. God also has instituted 'a rank and order amongst them, by which one is more eminent than another. Thus, those amongst them who have fulfilled the office of ambassadors from God, are superior to those who have not been delegated; and those who have instituted a new mode of religious worship,

admonitory prayer used at the beginning of the Mussulman service), he used to lean against one of the pillars of the mosque, which was made of date-wood. But, when the pulpit was made, he went upon it and repeated the Khútbah; and the pillar complained of it, and wept to such a degree that it was near rending into two parts. Then his majesty came down from the pulpit and embraced the pillar; and it became like the blubbering of a child which would not be pacified. At length it became silent, and his majesty said, 'The pillar cried at losing what it used to hear me repeat.'"—*Mischcat*, vol. ii. 710.

⁴⁰ The following narrative of a Mohammedan miracle is taken from the *Qanoon-è-Islàm*, published by Parbury and Allen, the best account of the peculiarities of the Mussulmans in India, that exists in any language.

A certain person's ship sprang a leak at sea, and the vessel was nigh sinking, when the captain vowed with a sincere heart, that should Qadir Wullee Sahil (a celebrated saint and prophet) vouchsafe to stop the leak, he would offer up, in his excellency's name, the profits of the cargo, and likewise a couple of small models of vessels formed of gold and silver. At that moment, the saint was engaged with the barber, in the operation of shaving, and instantly became acquainted with the predicament in which the captain stood. Out of kindness he threw away the looking-glass he held in his hand, which flew off to the vessel, and adhering to the aperture of the ship, stopped the leak. On the vessel's reaching its destination in safety, the commander, agreeably to promise, brought his offering of gold and two little vessels, one of gold the other of silver, and presented them to him. The saint directed the captain to restore to the barber his looking-glass; on which the captain, in astonishment, inquired what looking-glass he meant; and received in answer, that it was the one adhering to the aperture of the bottom of his ship where the water had entered. On inspection, it was found firmly attached to the vessel, and was accordingly removed and produced.

to those who have not been commissioned to discharge that trust. The first of all was Adam, the last and most excellent was Mohammed (the blessing of God be upon him). After the order of the prophets, the most excellent of created beings were Abú-Bekr, Omar, Othman, and Ali⁴¹. After them in the order of dignity follow the six most honoured companions of Mohammed, Talcha, Al-Zobeir, Zeid, Saad,

⁴¹ The four first Khalíphs, whose history will be found in the following chapters. Tradition says, that Mohammed congratulated the three first with an assurance of paradise, predicted the murder of Othman, and foretold the order of their succession. "Abú-Músa Ashári said, 'I was along with his majesty in a garden of Medina, and a man came and asked the garden-door to be opened; and his majesty said, Open the door for the man, and give him joy of paradise. Then the door was opened for him, and behold it was Abú-Bekr. Then I gave him joy of what his majesty had said; and he praised God. . . . After that, a man came and asked the door to be opened; and the prophet said, Open the door for him, and give him joy of paradise. And I opened the door for him, and behold it was Omar; and I informed him of what his majesty had said; and he praised God. . . . After that, a man came and asked the door to be opened, and his majesty said, Open the door for him, and give him joy of paradise, on a calamity which will happen to him. And I opened the door and saw it was Othman, and I told him what his majesty had said; and he praised God and said, God has been asked assistance.'"—*Mischcat*, &c. vol. ii. 768.

"Jabir said, 'His majesty once said, A good man saw in his sleep, that Abú-Bekr was joined with the messenger of God, and Omar with Abú-Bekr, and Othman with Omar.' Jabir adds, 'When I got up from the prophet, I said, As to the good man his majesty mentioned, it alluded to himself, and the joining of one to another is this, that they are his majesty's successors.'"—*Mischcat*, &c. vol. ii. 769.

The traditions respecting Ali are very numerous; it will be sufficient to quote two. "The prophet said, 'I am the house of knowledge, and Ali is its door.' " He also said, 'O Lord! he whose support I am, so is Ali; O Lord! love him who loves Ali, and hate him who hates Ali.'"—*Mischcat*, &c., vol. ii. 771.

Abd-al-Rahman, and Abú-Obeida⁴², and after them the rest of his associates, and after them the generation of men to which Mohammed (the peace and blessing of God be on him) was sent. May the favour of God be upon them all ! Then follow those wise persons, who perform good actions. The number of the prophets, according a certain tradition, amounts to two hundred and twenty-four thousand ; but according to another tradition, to one hundred and twenty-four thousand. Amongst these, three hundred and thirteen have filled the office of ambassadors ; and there are six who brought new constitutions ; Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed. May God bless and be favourable to them all ! It is not required as a condition of faith, that a person should know their number, but it is necessary that he should feel an affection towards them ; for whoever denies the veracity of one of the prophets, or doubts it, or doubts concerning any thing which a prophet has told, he, indeed, is an infidel.

Preserve us, O Lord, from the sin of infidelity.

OF THE LAST DAY OF FINAL RETRIBUTION.

FAITH in the last day consists in this, that we believe in our hearts, and confess with our tongues, that there will

⁴² There are many traditions respecting these Mussulman patriarchs, but they are scarcely worthy of being extracted. One, however, is very remarkable, as it seems to prove that Mohammed was fond of imitating the language of the New Testament in the close of his life. "Ebn-Mohariz said, ' We were one day at breakfast with his majesty, and Abú-Obeida was with us, and he said, Is there any better than us ? we have embraced Islám and fought along with you. His majesty said, Yes, a tribe which will come after you, will be better than you ; they will believe in me without having seen me.' " This is manifestly a weak imitation of John xx. 29, " Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

be really a last day, the day of the resurrection; and that the Almighty God will destroy this world, and whatever creatures are in it, except, however, those things which He will please to preserve; that is to say, the throne⁴³ of his glory, and the base on which it rests, and the spirit⁴⁴, and the table⁴⁵, and the pen⁴⁶, and paradise⁴⁷, and hell with

⁴³ The divine throne, in the description of which the Orientals exhaust all the gorgeous imaginings of Eastern magnificence, is said to have been created before the world, and to have been based upon the floods. This opinion seems to have been derived from some Rabbinical perversion of Psalm civ. 3: "Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters; who maketh the clouds his chariot; who walketh upon the wings of the wind."

⁴⁴ From the expression **רוח אלהים מרחפת על פני המים**, "The Spirit of God was brooding over the face of the waters," or as some, in accordance with a well-known Hebrew idiom, translate the two first words, "a mighty wind," the Talmudists and Mohammedans have formed some strange legends. They tell us, that after God had created the world in a fluid mass, He called into existence the spirit of the winds, and invested it with wings so numerous, that He alone could count them; this spirit He ordered to bear up the waters, which it instantly did. Then the waters rolled above the spirit, and the throne flew over the waters.

⁴⁵ The table on which the Divine decrees were written, before the world was called into being. On this table, say the commentators, is written all that has been, is and shall be, and no one but God can read what is there inscribed. Others assert, that on this table is written the eternal copy of the Korán, a transcript of which Gabriel brought to Mohammed on the night of power, that is, on the night that the prophet pretended to have made his celebrated night-journey to heaven. Though the chapters were revealed piece-meal, yet Gabriel allowed Mohammed to see the whole, once a year; tradition says, that he described it as bound in silk and adorned with gold and precious stones of paradise; in the last year of his life, Mohammed was permitted to see it twice.

⁴⁶ The pen with which God wrote his decrees; it is described as so large, that a man mounted on a fleet steed could not gallop round it in one hundred years.

⁴⁷ The geography of paradise was a favourite subject with the

those things which are contained in them. Then God will revive, quicken, and assemble mankind, and demand from them an account of their actions, and examine them, and

early monks in the Eastern churches; the Magians and the Rabbins had also their speculations on this curious topic, in which they showed the most monstrous ignorance, not merely of the earth's shape, but even of the geographical information common in their age and country. The Byzantine Syncellus gives us the following summary of the prevailing theory respecting paradise and the earth; it is the same as that recognised in the Korán.

“The sacred Scripture says, ‘He expelled Adam, and placed him opposite the Paradise of Delight,’ but Babylonia and all our earth is at a great distance from Eden, which lies in the Eastern clime where we place paradise. And that we should quote an inspired evidence for this assertion, let us summon as a witness, the divine Ephraim (Ephrem Syrus) that tongue rolling an ocean of eloquence, who, in his dogmatic orations, speaks thus of paradise:—‘Paradise is higher than all the lofty pleasant places of the earth; the waters of the deluge only reached its foundations. But the men older than the deluge dwelt between the ocean and paradise: the offspring of Cain, indeed, inhabited the land of Nod, which signifies “tremulous;” the sons of Seth dwelt on the higher grounds in obedience to the command of Adam, that they should not mix with the offspring of the fratricidal Cain. The descendants of Cain were of a low stature, on account of the curse pronounced upon their progenitor, but the children of Seth were giants, and like the angels of God in the upper regions. But the daughters of Cain, going to them with various musical instruments, brought them down from the upper regions and married them; contempt of the law consequently increasing, the deluge arose. And God brought Noah’s ark (across the ocean) to Mount Ararat, and thenceforward, men dwelt on this earth. From whence it is evident, that the earth now cultivated was then deserted, for by the mercy of God, men dwelt, before the deluge, in regions near paradise, between paradise and the ocean. But the outward darkness of which Christ speaks, lies beyond paradise. For paradise, with the ocean, goes all round the earth. Eden is on the eastern side, and the two lights of the sun and moon rise within paradise, and having traversed it, set outside.’” The classical scholar will at once recognise the almost perfect identity between this

show them the books, in which their good and bad actions are written. And some shall be upon his right hand, and some upon his left. Then shall He judge them in equity, and weigh their works, as well good as bad, and reward every soul according to the deeds done in the body. Some shall enter paradise through his goodness and mercy; but some shall be cast into hell⁴⁸. But of the faithful, none shall remain in flaming torments; but they shall enter paradise when they have suffered punishment according to the proportion of their sins; for the faithful shall ever abide in paradise, but the infidels in the flaming tortures of hell. Reverential fear is required to the perfection of belief in the resurrection; so that he is to be deemed an infidel who is careless about it, as likewise he who denies

and the geographical system adopted by Homer; and those acquainted with Indian literature, will see that this account of paradise is exactly the same with that of Mount Meru, in the Hindú mythology.

⁴⁸ The traditions respecting hell and its torments, would fill a volume; in one, we find the following curious astronomical theory. "Hassan Basori said, 'Abú-Horeira related to me, from the prophet of God, who said, The sun and moon are two pieces of cheese, which will be twisted up and thrown into hell-fire on the day of resurrection; and I said, What are the faults of the sun and moon? Abú-Horeira said, I inform you from the prophet of God.'"—*Mischcat*, &c., vol. ii. 638.

The following traditions seem to have been derived from the Hindús, among whom there is the constant mistake of enormous magnitude for sublimity. "Ebn-Omar said, 'The infernals will be very fat and big in hell; so much so, that the distance between the bottom of their ears and their shoulders, will be seven hundred years' journey; and verily, the thickness of their skins is seventy cubits; and their teeth like the mountain of Ohod.'.....Abdallah-ebn-Harith reported from Mohammed, 'Verily, there are serpents in hell, like camels with two bumps, one of them will bite once, the pain of which will be felt forty years; and verily, there are scorpions in hell like mules saddled, and one of them will bite, and its pain will remain forty years.'"—*Mischcat*, &c., *Ibid*.

it, or doubts concerning it, or says, "I do not fear the resurrection, nor do I desire paradise, nor do I dread hell."

Preserve us, O Lord, from the sin of infidelity.

OF THE DIVINE DECREE AND PREDESTINATION.

FAITH in the decree of God is, that we believe in the heart and confess with the tongue, that God, the Most Highest, has decreed all things and the modes of their occurrence⁴⁹; so that nothing can happen in this world, with respect to the conditions or operations of affairs, whether for good or evil—obedience or disobedience⁵⁰—

⁴⁹ The doctrine of predestination was that on which Mohammed laid the most stress, in conversation with his disciples. The traditions on this head, are numerous and precise; we shall quote those which best illustrate the different clauses of this section. "Ayesha (the daughter of Abú-Bekr and favourite wife of Mohammed,) reported, 'The prophet was called to say prayers over the bier of one of the children of the companions (those who joined Mohammed after his flight from Mecca), and I said to him, O Prophet of God, be happy; for this child is a bird of the birds of Paradise, for it hath committed no sin. Then the prophet said, Peradventure, it may be otherwise, because God hath created those who are fit for paradise when in their father's loins, and those for hell at the same time.'"—*Misohcat*, vol. i. 27.

⁵⁰ "Abú-Horeira reported, 'The prophet of God said that Adam and Moses (in the world of spirits) maintained a debate before God, and Adam got the better of Moses; who said, Thou art that Adam, whom God created by the power of his hand, and breathed into thee from his own spirit, and made the angels bow before thee, and gave thee an habitation in his own paradise; after which thou threwest man upon the earth, from the fault which thou didst commit.—Adam said, Thou art that Moses, whom God selected for his prophecy, and to converse with, and He gave thee twelve tables, in which are explained everything, and God made thee his confidant, and the bearer of his secrets; then how long was the Bible written

faith or infidelity—health or illness⁵¹—riches or poverty—life or death; which is not contained in the decree of God, and in his judgment, ordinance, and will. But God has thus decreed virtue, obedience and faith, that He may so ordain and will them to be subservient to his direction, pleasure, and command. On the contrary, He has decreed vice, disobedience and infidelity, and still ordains, wills, and decrees them; but without his salutary direction, good pleasure, or command, nay rather, by his temptation, wrath, and prohibitions. But whoever will say, that God is not delighted with virtue and faith, and is not wroth with vice and infidelity, or that God has decreed good and evil with equal complacency, is an infidel. For God wills good that He may take pleasure in it; and evil, that it may become the object of his rightful indignation.

Direct us, good God, into the right path⁵².

before I was created?—Moses said, Forty years.—Then Adam said, Didst thou see in the Bible, that Adam disobeyed God?—He said, Yes.—Adam said, Dost thou reproach me on a matter, which God wrote in the Bible forty years before creating me?"—*Mischcat*, vol. i. 26.

⁵¹ "Salmah once said, 'O prophet of God! you suffer pain from the poison which you swallowed in mutton, at Khaibar.' (See the preceding chapter.) He said, 'I do not experience anything from it, but what was pre-ordained.'"—*Mischcat*, vol. i. 37.

⁵² "Abú-Horeira reported, 'The prophet of God came out of his house, when we were debating about Fate; and he was angry and became red in the face to such a degree, that you would say the seeds of a pomegranate had been bruised upon it. And he said, Hath God ordered you to debate of Fate, or was I sent to you for this? Your forefathers were destroyed for debating about Fate and Destiny; I adjure you not to argue on these points.'"—*Mischcat*, vol. i. 31.

End of the First Part of the Creed IMAN (Faith); here beginneth the Second Part DIN (Practice).

OF LUSTRATIONS, MORE ESPECIALLY THAT CALLED
GHASL, OR THE GREATER PURIFICATION.

IT must be remembered, that there are seven species of water fit for rightly performing religious ablutions; that is to say, rain, sea, river, fountain, well, snow, and ice-water. But the principal requisites for the lustration Ghâsl, are three: 1, intention; 2, a perfect cleansing; 3, that the water should touch the entire skin and every hair. And there are five requisites of the traditional law, or Sonna⁵³: 1, the appropriate phrase, *Bismillah*⁵⁴, must be pronounced; 2, the palms must be washed before the hands are put into the basin; 3, the lustration Wodú must be performed; 4, the skin must be rubbed with the hand; and 5, it must be prolonged. (We omit the cases in which this lustration is required.)

OF THE LUSTRATION WODU.

THE principal parts, indeed the divine⁵⁵ institutions, of the lustration Wodú, are six: 1, intention; 2, the washing of the entire face; 3, the washing of the hands and fore-arms up to the elbows; 4, the rubbing of some parts of the

⁵³ The Sonna of the Mohammedans exactly corresponds with the מִשְׁנָה *Mishnah* of the Jews, and comprehends all their religious traditions.

⁵⁴ This well-known formula signifies, "In the name of the most merciful God;" the Mohammedans use it at the beginning of every undertaking, and write it at the commencement of every letter or treatise; it begins every chapter in the Korán, except the ninth.

⁵⁵ They are called *divine*, because they are taken from the Korán, chap. v.

head; 5, the washing of the feet as far as the ancles; and 6, observance of the prescribed order. And the institutes of the traditional law about this lustration are ten: 1, the preparatory formula, Bismillah, must be used; 2, the palms must be washed before the hands are put into the basin; 3, the mouth must be cleansed; 4, water must be drawn through the nostrils; 5, the entire head and ears must be rubbed; 6, if the beard be thick, the fingers must be drawn through it; 7, the toes must be separated; 8, the right hand and foot should be washed before the left; 9, these ceremonies must be thrice repeated; 10, the whole must be performed in uninterrupted succession. (We omit the cases in which this lustration is required.)

OF PURIFICATION BY SAND⁵⁶.

THE divine institutions respecting purification by sand are four: 1, intention; 2, the rubbing of the face; 3, the rubbing of the hands and fore-arms up to the elbows; and 4, the observance of this order. But the Sonnite ordinances are three: 1, the formula Bismillah; 2, that the right hand and foot precede the left; and 3, that the ceremony be performed without interruption.

OF PRAYER.

THE divine institutions, on which the rites of prayer rest,

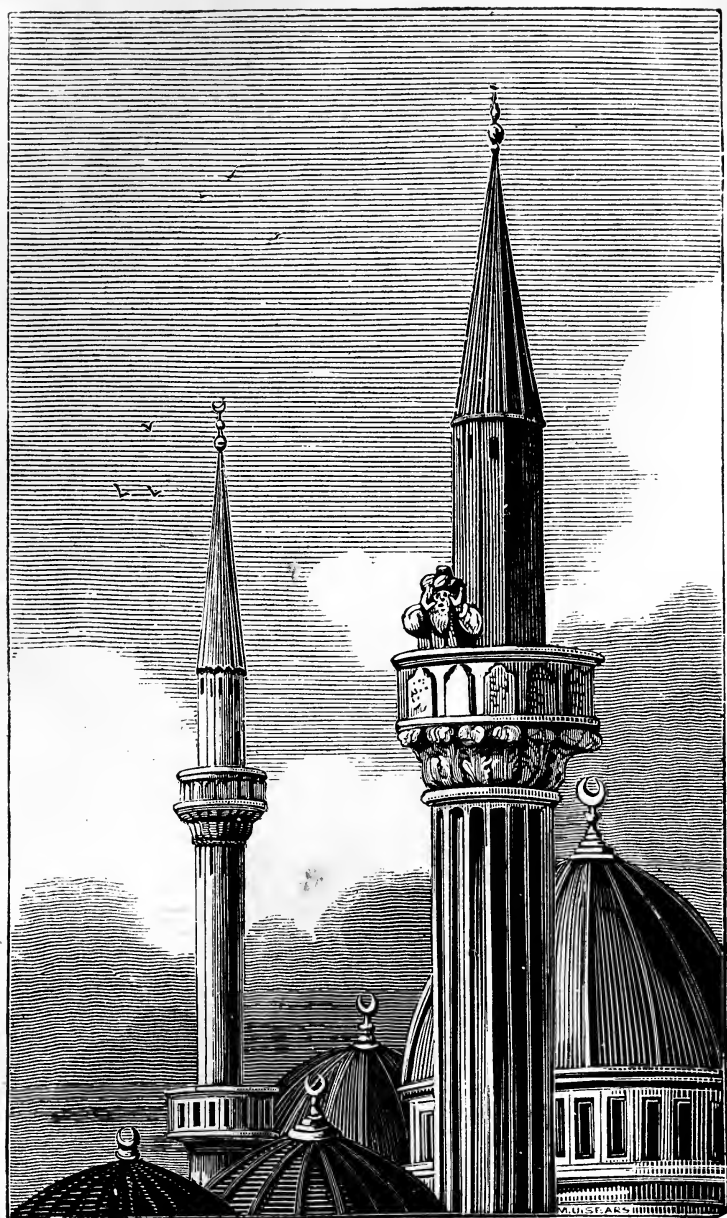
⁵⁶ The Mohammedans have borrowed the permission to use sand for water, in case of necessity, from the Jews. Indeed, Cedrenus mentions an instance of sand being used for a Christian baptism. Sheer necessity dictated the permission; we need not, therefore, have recourse to Reland's strange theory, that sand is really a liquid. Four requisites to its validity are added by the commentators: 1, the person must be on a journey; 2, he must have diligently searched for water; 3, it must be at the stated time of prayer; 4, the sand must be clean.

are thirteen: 1, intention; 2, magnification; 3, its formula (God is great); 4, an erect posture; 5, reading the first chapter of the Korán; 6, a bending of the body; 7, raising it again; 8, prostrate adoration; 9, sitting down⁵⁷; 10, sitting down a second time; 11, the second confession; 12, its formula (I testify that Mohammed is the Ambassador of God); 13, the observance of this order. But, the Sonnite ordinances are: 1, the first proclamation of the time of prayer, called Azan⁵⁸; 2, the second proclamation; 3, the first confession (I acknowledge that there is no God but God); 4, a certain form of prayer⁵⁹. There

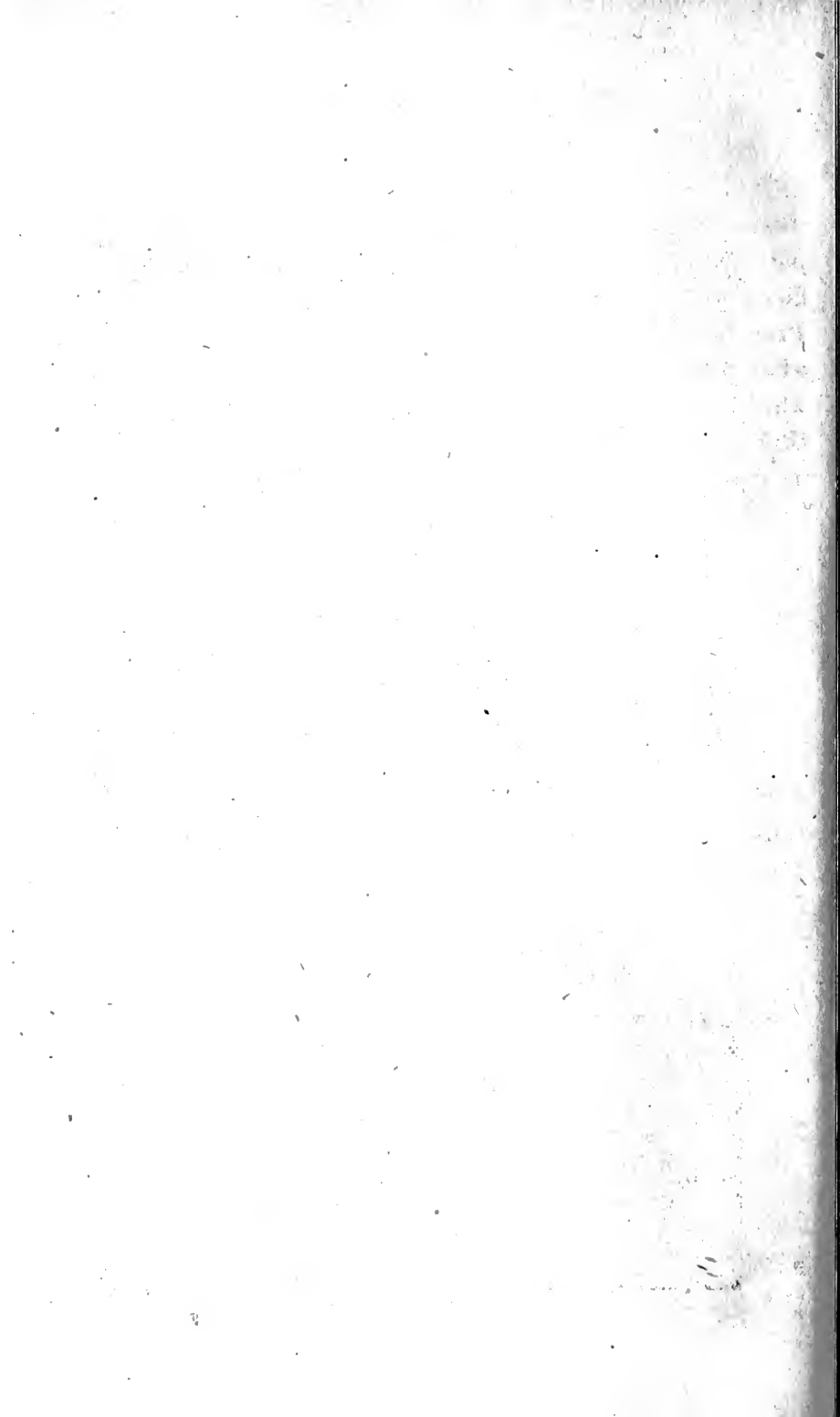
⁵⁷ For the purpose of meditation.

⁵⁸ The muezzin, or crier, before making proclamation, should repeat the following prayer: "O my God! give me piety; purify me; thou alone hast the power. Thou art my benefactor and my master, O Lord! Thou art towards me as I desire,—may I be towards thee as thou desirest. My God! cause my interior to be better than my exterior. Direct all my actions to rectitude. O God! deign in thy mercy to direct my will towards that which is good. Grant me at the same time, true honour and spiritual poverty, O thou, the most merciful of the merciful." After this prayer, he must make proclamation in the following terms: "God is great (four times repeated); I bear witness, that there is no God but God (twice repeated); I bear witness, that Mohammed is the prophet of God (twice repeated); Come to the temple of salvation (twice repeated); God is great, God is most great; there is no God but God, and Mohammed is his prophet." The same proclamation is made at the five canonical hours, but at morning prayer, the muezzin must add, "Prayer is better than sleep" (twice repeated).—*Hidayút-ool-Islám*, Calcutta, 1804.

⁵⁹ The formula is thus given in Hottinger's *Ecclesiastical History*. "O God, we implore thy aid and ask pardon from thee; we believe in thee; we trust in thee; we humble ourselves before thee; leaving and rejecting him who denies thee. O God, we will worship and pray to thee. We will adore thee, we will hasten to thee, we will speed to converse with thee; we will place all our hope in thy mercy. We will fear thy punishment; the punishment which thou hast prepared for unbelievers, for thy wrath is upon unbelievers."



THE MUEZZIN CALLING TO PRAYERS.



are five things required before prayer: 1, the body must be free from every polluting stain⁶⁰; 2, it must be covered with a clean garment; 3, the worshipper must stand in a pure place; 4, the stated time must be observed; 5, the face must be turned to the Kebla, or temple of Mecca.—Prayers should be offered five times in the day: 1, at noon, when five genuflexions are necessary; 2, in the afternoon, which requires five also; 3, the evening, which demands three; 4, the night, which requires four; and 5, the morning, when two genuflexions are sufficient⁶¹.

OF ALMS⁶².

ALMS should be given from five kinds of property: 1, cattle; 2, money; 3, corn; 4, fruits; and 5, merchandize. But there are three kinds of cattle from which alms must be given: 1, camels; 2, oxen; and 3, sheep. In order that alms should be given duly, six things are necessary: 1, the donor must believe in Islám; 2, he must be free; 3, he must be perfectly master of his property; 4, the value of the property must be of a certain amount; 5, it must have been a year in his possession; and 6, the animals from which alms are due, must be those which he pastures⁶³. Alms must be paid from both gold and silver money, according to the preceding regulations.—Three things are required in giving alms for corn: 1, the corn must have been planted by man, and not be of spontaneous

⁶⁰ Consequently the lesser lustration, Wodú, must precede prayer.

⁶¹ A more full account of the ceremonies required at prayer, may be found in the *Qanoon-è-Islám*.

⁶² The Oriental nations have from the earliest ages regarded alms-giving as a religious duty.

⁶³ Alms consequently are not due from beasts of burden, or animals used for the purposes of husbandry.

growth ; 2, it must be laid up in a granary ; and 3, it must amount to a certain quantity.—Alms must be given from the fruit of the palm and the vine ; and for the right performance of this, the four first of the six preceding precepts must be observed.—The requisites for giving pecuniary alms are also applicable to the case of merchandize. But the divine institution respecting the alms distributed,—with respect to the amount of wealth, and with respect to the number of persons, at the end of Ramazan⁶⁴,—is twofold: 1, the intention with which the alms are bestowed ; and 2, their actual distribution.

OF ABSTINENCE.

THE requisites for a lawful fast are three: 1, the person must profess Islám ; 2, he must have attained the age of puberty ; and 3, he must be of sound mind. Five divine institutions must be observed in fasting ; ten things make it null and void. (The particulars need not be enumerated.)

OF THE PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA⁶⁵.

THE divine institutions of this rite are five: 1, the intention with which a person resolves to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and binds himself by a vow to God ; 2, a residence on Mount Arafât ; 3, shaving the head in the valley of Mina ; 4, going round the temple of Mecca ; and 5, the course between Safa and Merwa.

End of the Mohammedan Creed.

⁶⁴ At the end of the fast Ramazan, every true believer is obliged to give an alms, called *Zea*, for every member of his family.

⁶⁵ See Appendix.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FIRST FOUR KHALIPHS.

MOHAMMED, like Alexander the Great, died without naming a successor, but the dominions he had acquired were not dismembered, because the new religion united all its professors into one body. That there should be a single leader was unanimously agreed, but to whom the office should be intrusted was for three days fiercely disputed. Ali, the nephew and son-in-law of the prophet, had the best claim, if hereditary right was taken into account; a large body of the Mussulmans believe that Mohammed had made an express declaration in his favour, but his character was not very popular, and he had a powerful enemy in Ayesha, whose hatred he had provoked by insinuations against her chastity. As she had attended her husband in his sickness, she had an opportunity of suppressing any declaration he might have made respecting his nephew, and her subsequent conduct shows that she was not very scrupulous in her means of revenge. It is not, however, by any means certain that Mohammed made any such declaration; though it may fairly be presumed that Ayesha would have concealed it, for, besides hating Ali, she was jealous of his wife Fatima, her own step-daughter, whom she regarded as her rival in influence and dignity. She was, besides, naturally anxious to secure the elevation of her father, who had paid her the unusual compliment of taking a name from his daughter, and ever since her marriage called himself Abú-Bekr (the Father of the Virgin).

Mohammed seems himself to have foreseen the disputes that would arise among his successors; "the Khaliphate,"

said he, "will not last more than thirty years after my death;" it would probably have found a much earlier term of destruction, had not the fiery Omar given the example of swearing fidelity to Abú-Bekr, and most of the other "companions" adopted the same course. Ali for some time resisted, but Omar besieging him in his own house, and threatening to fire the building, he was forced to surrender, and swear allegiance to his rival.

Abú-Bekr was born at Mecca, some years after Mohammed; he was one of the earliest converts to Islám, indeed, by many he is named "the first believer;" his rank and influence were unquestionably of the greatest service to the prophet during the dangers he had to encounter in the early part of his career. The original name of this important convert was Abd-al-Kaaba, that is, the servant of the Kaaba, a mark of the superstitious respect which the Arabs showed for their ancient sanctuary. When he became a Mussulman, he took the name of Abd-allah, that is, a servant of God; finally, when he gave his daughter Ayesha in marriage to Mohammed, he called himself Abú-Bekr, as has been already mentioned, and by that name he is best known to posterity.

The title of the new sovereign was that of Khaliph, or vicar of the prophet; he was both *Emir-al-mominin*, "prince of the true believers," and also *Imám-al-moslimin*, "head of the faithful," thus uniting in himself the authority of a monarch and of a pontiff. Abú-Bekr had been always remarkable for his boundless attachment to Mohammed; we have already seen how he swore to his belief in the night-journey to heaven; but tradition mentions a still more remarkable anecdote of this friendship, which occurred during the flight from Mecca. It was Abú-Bekr who accompanied the prophet on this occasion; the pursuit was

close and vigorous, the fugitives, worn down by fatigue, sought refuge in a cave. But God provided for their safety; he sent the timid dove to build her nest in the mouth of the cavern, and a spider to spin its web over the entrance; the sight of these circumstances deceived the Meccans, and they passed the cave, persuaded that it was deserted. Few traditions are more frequently quoted by the Arabs than this; the following stanzas alluding to it are taken from one of their most popular poems.

How highly honoured was that cave,
Holding the great, the good, the brave !
But blindness, like a wizard's spell,
Upon the vile pursuers fell.

Yes, truth itself, and he who bold
In Islám's cause ne'er falsehood told,
Were there—and yet the wicked cried,
“ Away ! that cave could no one hide.”

For there they saw, a fearless guest,
The timid dove had built her nest ;
And there the spider undismayed
Had wide his wondrous web displayed.

But Abú-Bekr had stronger claims to popularity; he was brave, mild, and generous; his modest demeanour made him generally beloved, his pious character was universally respected. He came to the throne at a very agitated period, for while the Mussulmans were distracted by various disputes, a new impostor threatened Islámism with total ruin. Moseilama took advantage of Mohammed's death to urge his pretensions with renewed vigour, several of the Arab tribes threw off the yoke that had been imposed upon them, and prepared to revive their ancient institutions, and it seemed as if the new system would not long survive its founder. But the promptitude of Abú-Bekr disconcerted

his opponents; he sent an army against the rebels, under the fiery Khaled, and had soon the satisfaction to learn that Moseilama, with the chief of his partisans, had been exterminated. This was followed by the complete subjugation of Arabia, and the final establishment of Islámism throughout the peninsula.

But such success was not obtained without corresponding losses. Abú-Bekr particularly lamented the number of the prophet's companions that fell in these campaigns, and fearing that the revelations of Mohammed might be dispersed and lost, he gave orders that they should be collected into the Korán. We shall have, in another part of this work, occasion to notice the slovenly manner in which the persons employed performed their task; the compilation was subsequently revised in the reign of the Khaliph Othman, and it is probable that there are many passages far different from those which Mohammed wrote.

The Khaliph, not knowing how to find employment for the vast multitude of enthusiasts that arose in every part of Arabia, resolved to display the standard of the faith in the fields of Syria. Never was there a more favourable moment for such an enterprise; for never before had successive revolutions so weakened the strength of the Byzantine and Persian empires. Desirous first to ascertain his chance of success, he sent detachments to the borders of Syria and Babylonia, or, as it is now more commonly called, Irák. As they encountered no obstacle, but returned loaded with plunder, the Khaliph invited all the Arabs to join in the enterprise he projected, and crowds of recruits flocked to him from every quarter. When all things were ready, he reviewed the troops, and issued his celebrated code of regulations for the conduct of the army; it was addressed to the general Abú-Sofián, and contained the following direc-

tions: "Take care to treat your men with tenderness and lenity. Consult with your officers upon all pressing occasions, and encourage them to face the enemy with bravery and resolution. If you are victorious, spare all the aged, the women, and the children. Neither cut down palm-trees nor burn any fields of corn. Spare all fruit-trees; slay no cattle but such as are required for your own use. Adhere to your engagements inviolably; spare the inhabitants of monasteries; desecrate no houses of religious worship. Cleave the skulls of those members of the synagogue of Satan, who shave their crowns, give them no quarter, unless they embrace Islámism, or pay tribute."

To relate the particulars of the mighty conquests achieved by the army of the Saracens, as the Arabs were from this time generally called, would be equally inconsistent with the plan and limits of this volume. We must, at present, be content to say, that from the cowardice and treachery of the Byzantine provincial governors, the invaders encountered no effective opposition, and, in less than two years, the greater part of Syria was subdued. While the Mussulman army was thus pursuing its career of victory, Abú-Bekr died, and was interred near Mohammed at Medina.

The character of the first Khaliph had a beneficial effect on the Mohammedan religion; for, though the partisans of Ali accuse him of ambition, and of uniting with his daughter Ayesha to suppress the prophet's declarations in favour of Ali, yet they do not deny him the praise of disinterestedness, justice, and benevolence. Before his accession, he had bestowed the greater part of his estate to feed the poor, and had been publicly named by the prophet the most charitable of men. When placed at the head of affairs, he only took from the treasury the sum absolutely necessary

for his daily support; before entering on the sovereignty, he ordered an exact account to be taken of his personal estate, and at his death it was found to be considerably diminished. In fact, the absolute ruler of the richest countries of the world left behind him but a single camel and an Ethiopian slave, and even these he bequeathed to his successor. He dictated his will to Othman in the following terms.—“IN THE NAME OF THE MOST MERCIFUL GOD. This is the last will and testament of *Abd-allah Ebn Abú-Koháfa*, when he was in the last hour of this world, and the first of the next; an hour in which the infidel must believe, the wicked be convinced of their evil ways, and liars speak the truth. I nominate *Omar Ebn al Khattáb* my successor; therefore hearken to him, and obey him. If he acts right, he will confirm my expectations; if otherwise, he must render an account of his own actions. My intentions are good, but I cannot foresee the future results. However, those who do ill shall render a severe account hereafter. Fare-ye-well. May ye be ever attended by the Divine favour and blessing.” When Abú-Bekr had concluded this dictation he fainted; on his recovery, he desired Othman to read the document, soon after which he expired. When information of the event was brought to Omar, he exclaimed, “The life of Abú-Bekr has been such, that it will be impossible for those who come after to imitate his sublime example.” Two proverbs, attributed to him, deserve to be quoted: “Good actions are a sure protection against the blows of adversity.”—“Death is the most difficult of all things before it comes, and the easiest when it is past.”

Omar was, like his predecessor, a native of Mecca; he had been originally a camel-herd, and never became quite free from the coarseness and rusticity incident to his humble

origin. At first a zealous idolater, he proposed to extirpate all the followers of Mohammed; when he became afterwards a Mussulman, he was just as eager to massacre all who would not believe in the prophet. Violent on every occasion, he breathed nothing but slaughter; and countless anecdotes are related of his unrelenting temper. One of these must suffice. A Mussulman having a suit against a Jew, was condemned by Mohammed, and, in consequence, carried his appeal before the tribunal of Omar; scarcely had he stated his case, when Omar, springing from his seat, struck the appellant dead with one blow of his sabre, exclaiming, "So perish all who will not submit to the decision of God's chosen prophet." Rigorous justice, as interpreted by the Mohammedan laws, and extreme severity, rendered his character more respected than beloved. Mohammed said of him, "Truth speaks by the mouth of Omar." He added, that "if God had to send another prophet on the earth, Omar would be the object of his choice."

When Abú-Bekr informed Omar that he had chosen him as his successor, Omar, with mingled pride and humility, answered, "I have no need of the Khaliphate." Abú-Bekr replied, "But the Khaliphate has need of you," and thus removed all further scruple. On his accession, he called himself the "Khaliph of the Khaliph of God's apostle," but, finding the title inconveniently long, he changed it into that of "Commander of the Faithful;" and this became, subsequently, the favourite designation of his successors. When first he addressed his subjects, he stood a step lower on the pulpit than Abú-Bekr had been accustomed to do; he informed his hearers that he would not have undertaken the arduous task of government, only that he reposed perfect confidence in their intention to observe the law, and adhere to the pure faith; he concluded with these

remarkable words: "O Mussulmans, I take God to witness, that none of you shall be *too strong* for me to sacrifice the rights of the weak, nor *too weak* for me to neglect the rights of the strong."

No sooner was Omar placed at the head of affairs, than the armies of the Mohammedans seemed to have acquired tenfold vigour; and this was not diminished by the severe treatment which the gallant Khaled, for a trivial offence, received from the jealous Khaliph. The greater part of Syria and Mesopotamia had been subdued during the life of Abú-Bekr; the conquest of these countries was now completed; the ancient empire of the Persians was overthrown at the battle of Kádeseh; Palestine, Phœnicia, and Egypt, submitted to the Saracen yoke almost without a struggle; and the standard of the prophet floated in triumph from the sands of the Cyrenian desert to the banks of the Indus. "During the reign of Omar," says Khondemir, "the Saracens conquered thirty-six thousand cities, towns, and castles, destroyed four thousand Christian, Magian, and Pagan temples, and erected fourteen hundred mosques."

The annals of the world present no parallel to this recital; the Arabs were animated by an enthusiasm which made them despise the most fearful odds; they had ever in their mouths the magnificent orientalism, traditionally ascribed to Mohammed, "In the shades of the scymitars is paradise prefigured;" they sought battle as a feast, and counted danger a sport. A fiercer spirit of course displayed itself in the Mohammedan creed; the sanguinary precepts of propagandism, to which the prophet had given utterance after his power was established at Medina, quite obscured the milder doctrine taught at Mecca; and even these were surpassed in ferocity by traditions which some

of the sterner enthusiasts declared that they had derived from the prophet himself. Abú-Horeira* declared that he heard from Mohammed, "He who shall die without having fought for God, or who never proposed that duty to himself, verily consigns himself to destruction by his hypocrisy," and also the singular declaration, "He who shall bestow a horse upon one who would enlist himself under the banner of the Most High, and be one who has faith in God and in his promises, surely, both the food of that horse and the sustenance of his rider, with the ordure of the former, shall be placed in the scales for his advantage on the day of judgment." We shall add one more, preserved on the authority of Ebn Abbas: "There are two descriptions of eyes which the fire of hell shall not destroy; the eyes that weep in contemplating the indignation of God, and the eyes which are closed when in the act of combat for the cause of God."

Neither splendid victories nor extensive dominions changed the stern character of Omar; he still preserved the rustic simplicity of his manners, and his ancient contempt for luxurious ornament. When his forces had blockaded Jerusalem, and the inhabitants, despairing of success, offered to surrender to the Khaliph in person, he departed from Medina to receive their submission, mounted on a red camel, having for his entire equipage two sacks, one containing corn and the other fruit; before him was a leathern vessel of water, and behind him a large platter

* This name is a curious example of the use of the word Abú (father) amongst the Arabians. They frequently apply it to a quality for which a person is remarkable; thus "the father of stupidity," means a blockhead, "the father of beards," a man with a flowing beard. Abú-Horeira was remarkable for nothing so much as his attachment to a favourite cat, and hence his name, which signifies "the father of a cat."

from which he used to take his meals. In this guise he travelled the entire road from Medina to Jerusalem, punishing the Mussulmans who led a scandalous life, and every where providing for a rigorous administration of justice.

On his arrival, the inhabitants prepared a splendid palace for his reception; but he refused to enter the city, and had a tent erected outside the walls. In this tent, the deputies found the master of their destinies sitting on the naked earth. The terms granted to the citizens of Jerusalem are remarkable for their moderation; the security of the persons and properties of the inhabitants were guaranteed, the free exercise of religion permitted, and the churches allowed to remain with their present possessors. Even when the Khaliph was anxious to erect a mosque, he requested the patriarch to point him out an appropriate situation; that prelate led him to the spot where Solomon's temple once stood, which was then covered with filth, and the Khaliph readily accepted the ground as it was. He himself set the example of clearing the rubbish; the army followed with eager emulation, and the Mosque of Omar, erected on this spot, is one of the most beautiful specimens of Arabian architecture. But though tolerant to the Christians, the Khaliph showed himself severe to those of his own followers who had departed from the rigour of the national manners. Having learned that some of his men wore flowing robes of silk, he ordered them to be extended on the earth, with their faces to the ground, and their silken robes to be torn from their shoulders. He punished with the bastinado those convicted of drinking wine; he made proclamation that those who had transgressed, should accuse themselves, and such was the influence he possessed over his troops, that many voluntarily confessed their guilt, and submitted to the degrading punishment.

Omar was assassinated in the eleventh year of his reign, by a slave, whose complaints he had refused to hear. He was buried in the same tomb with Abú-Bekr and Mohammed.

In the history of Mohammedanism, Omar is a person second only in importance to the founder of Islám. His strict severity was useful at a time when unprecedented success seemed to excuse military violence; his impartiality greatly abated the calamities of conquest. We have already mentioned, that he did not spare the gallant Khaled, but it is probable that, in his conduct to that hero, he was actuated more by jealousy than by a love of justice: it must however be added, that in no instance did he permit high station to shelter oppressors. A curious circumstance, characteristic of the age, is recorded. Omar carried a cane with which he personally chastised officers even of the highest rank, whom he detected in any guilty action, and hence arose the proverb, "Omar's cane is more terrible than the sword of the bravest warrior."

His strictness in enforcing religious ordinances was carried to the very extreme of fanaticism: by his orders the splendid library which the Ptolemies had collected at Alexandria, was burnt to heat the public baths; and the invaluable records of Persia, assembled by the zeal of the Sassanides in Modain, were hurled into the waters of the Tigris. His early education had rendered him insensible to the charms of literature or art; when his generals sent him, from the palace of the Persian kings, an unrivalled piece of tapestry, representing a flower-garden, worked with gold and precious stones, he ordered this elaborate piece of workmanship to be cut in pieces, and the fragments distributed to his soldiers. For his own use, he had neither palace, nor court, nor house; during the time of prayer, he publicly

officiated in the mosque; the remainder of the day he spent in the streets and squares, and it was there he gave audience to the ambassadors of the most powerful cotemporary princes. His dress was not better than that of his meanest subjects; when reproached for the deficiencies of his appearance, he replied, "I would rather please the Lord by my conduct, than men by my dress." He was more indiscriminate in his charity than Abú-Bekr; the first Khaliph relieved none whose distress had been occasioned by vicious conduct, Omar gave to all who asked. When reproached for making no distinction, he replied, "Man is placed upon the earth, only to do good to his brethren; the judgment of man's worthiness should be left to his Creator." The temperance of Omar was as remarkable as his simplicity; his ordinary food was coarse barley-bread seasoned with salt, and on days of abstinence the salt was laid aside; his only beverage was water. When at meals, he invited all who chanced to be present, to take a share.

But the splendour of his public works was a strange contrast to the meanness of his private life. We have already mentioned the mosque he caused to be erected in Jerusalem; he also greatly enlarged and beautified that which Mohammed had built in Medina. By his orders, the foundations were laid of cities that rapidly grew to greatness, Old Cairo, Cufa, and Bassora. He caused the canal between the Nile and the Red Sea to be repaired and opened, in order to facilitate the importation of corn into Arabia, which the recent enlargement of the cities had rendered a matter of prime necessity. It was Omar, who first introduced the custom of dating from the Hegira; before his time the Arabians dated from the last great event which had interested the whole nation,—a war, a famine, or a plague,—and thus rendered their chronology a mass of

inextricable confusion. To him also is owing the institution of a police force in Mecca and Medina, the establishment of a fund to provide for the pay of the army, and the preparation of an equitable scale of rewards for those who had distinguished themselves in the propagation of Islám. It is no wonder, that with such claims to admiration, the name of Omar should be so celebrated among the most rigid sects of the Mohammedans. But while the Sonnites labour to extend the fame of Omar, his memory is detested by the partisans of Ali; his name is the proverbial expression for all that is base in the countries where the Schiite principles prevail; no person that bears it, dare own it in public; and to such excess do the Persians carry their hatred, that they celebrate the day of Omar's assassination as a public festival.

Omar, finding death approach, was at a loss whom to nominate his successor; and, to remedy the difficulty, devised the most extraordinary expedient that can be imagined. He directed that a council of six should be assembled after his death, that three days should be allowed them for deliberation, and that if, at the end of that time, they had not agreed on a new Khaliph, they should all be slain. The six who met to deliberate under these circumstances, were, Ali, cousin and son-in-law of Mohammed, Othman, likewise his son-in-law, Zobeir, the cousin of the prophet, and Abd-al-rahman, Talha, and Saad, his favourite companions. After some deliberation, they elected Othman, and he was installed third Khaliph.

Othman was, like his predecessors, a native of Mecca, sprung from a different branch of the same tribe that had given birth to the prophet. He married successively two daughters of Mohammed, long acted as his secretary, and enjoyed his intimate confidence. It is said, that Mohammed

was so delighted with the generosity displayed by his secretary, that he exclaimed, "O my God, I am satisfied with Othman, be thou also satisfied with him." On another occasion, seeing Othman approach, he covered his face with his robe, and said, "Should not I be ashamed before a man whose merits would put angels to the blush?" At the time of his accession, he was more than eighty years of age, but his health was unshaken, and the vigour of his faculties unabated.

The third Khaliph pursued the warlike policy of his predecessors; by his orders the Mussulman armies completed the conquest of Persia, and extended the sway of the Saracens to the river Oxus, and the borders of India. Northern Africa, as far as the shores of the Atlantic, was subdued by another army; and a fleet, equipped in the harbours of Egypt and Syria, subdued the island of Cyprus, and menaced the northern coasts of the Mediterranean. But this success produced its natural effect; it required all the energies of Omar's stern character to resist the progress of luxury and dissipation; the weak Othman was utterly incapable of any similar exertion. The wild sons of the desert began to rival in magnificence the most wealthy monarchs; they became ambitious of places and titles, they preferred the splendour of the court to the glory of the field. Othman's gentleness and facility accelerated the progress of corruption; naturally generous, he was unwilling to refuse any applicant, and as the foremost candidates for office are generally those least fitted for its duties, the administration fell into the hands of the designing and the profligate. With some show of reason, the old companions of Mohammed complained that they were set aside to make room for the family of Othman; and, with still more justice, that the impru-

dence and wantonness of youth was preferred to their experience.

Religion did not escape from the general corruption; new sects began to be formed; and the jealousy of the partisans of Ali daily acquired fresh strength. Abú-Dar, an old companion of the prophet, misrepresenting some passages of the Korán, declared that the riches of this world were the source of every crime, and that the wealthy should be compelled by force to give their superfluities to the poor. Such doctrine was sure to obtain a favourable hearing in a half-civilized country, where, from the unequal distribution of plunder, a few had been suddenly enriched, but the great bulk of the population reduced to comparative poverty. At the same time, another sectary announced that Mohammed was about to re-appear, and execute justice on the wicked and cruel men who tyrannized over the Mussulmans. The people, expecting an approaching regeneration, despised their rulers, and neglected the duties of social life. The second revision of the Korán, ordained by Othman, was regarded by many of the Mussulmans as a corruption of the true religion; they suspected that the Khaliph did not pay sufficient deference to the authority of the prophet; especially as in certain prayers he made four prostrations where Mohammed only used two; and he had rebuilt a chapel destroyed by Mohammed's special command.

We have been so long accustomed to see the Mohammedan religion united with despotic government, that we are naturally surprised to find a pure democracy under the Khaliphate; from the very beginning, every affair of importance was submitted to the general assembly; and all, except slaves, were permitted to state their opinions freely. No practical inconvenience arose from this custom, whilst

disorder was checked by the sacred character of the prophet, the dignified demeanour of Abú-Bekr, or the stern severity of Omar. But the imbecile Othman possessed no such influence; when he attempted to stem the popular tide, he was attacked in his very pulpit, and driven by volleys of stones from the assembly. Satires and lampoons, "those straws," which, as Lord Bacon says, "show the direction of the wind," appeared in countless abundance; we shall venture to translate one as a specimen.

Abú-Bekr and Omar, both true to their trust,
A minaret raised as a guide to the just:
From the Mussulmans' treasure, they ne'er but with sorrow
And in absolute need, e'en a dicchem would borrow.
But thou, worthless Othman, art ready to trample
On their laws, and their rules, and their noble example:
Thou hast called to thy councils, the wicked, the base,
Whom the prophet of God drove away with disgrace;
The wealth of God's servants to them thou hast given,
And the hearts of the good by thy follies are riven.

Parties and factions were formed on every side; each province demanded a new governor, every faction desired a new Khaliph. The leaders in these disturbances were the ancient companions of the prophet; and many of the most devoted Mussulmans were ready to join in a revolution. At length a part of the Egyptian army marched suddenly to Medina, and demanded an immediate reform of abuses. By a liberal use of promises and persuasions, they were induced to retire; but it was only to return the following year, irritated by disappointment, and strengthened by large bodies of partisans from Cufa and Bassorah. Othman once more soothed the mutineers, but as they were returning home, they learned that the Khaliph's secretary had sent official orders that they should be massacred. It is not quite certain that the Khaliph had sanctioned this perfidy,

but that it was meditated does not admit of doubt. The soldiers, justly enraged, again appeared before Medina, demanding the head of the secretary; when that was refused, they slew Othman himself.

The fatal day on which this atrocity occurred was Friday, which the Mohammedans keep holy. It was Othman's custom on this day to fast until he had read through the entire Korán, and he was engaged in the perusal of the sacred volume, when the approach of the assassins was announced. Some of the Khaliph's friends advised him to make some preparations for resistance, but he replied, that he had seen Mohammed in a dream, and had been informed, that they should break their fast together that day in Paradise.

In the mean time, the conspirators advanced sword in hand. Five hundred guards attempted to check their progress; but were cut to pieces; the Khaliph's wife threw herself in their path and had her hand cut off; the sons of Ali, and some of the old companions of the prophet, endeavoured to propitiate the mutineers, but were forced to consult their own safety by flight. Othman tranquilly read the Korán in the midst of the confusion; he scarcely deigned to raise his head, when the enraged soldiers burst into his apartment. At their head was a son of Abú-Bekr, named Mohammed, who seized Othman by the beard, and prepared to strike a fatal blow. The Khaliph looking him steadily in the face, asked, "O Mohammed! what think you that your sainted father would say, if he saw my beard in your grasp?" Struck with the words, Mohammed drew back in silence; but his companions, less scrupulous, rushed upon Othman, and he fell covered with wounds. His blood gushed upon the Korán which he held in his hands; it is said to be still preserved as a relic in the

mosque of Damascus. So great was the terror diffused by this event, that no one dared to perform the funeral obsequies; the body remained three days unburied; at length Ali gave orders for its sepulture, but it was buried by night, and in a private cemetery.

The orthodox Mussulmans reverence Othman in the present day for the action which excited most resentment in his own, namely, the revision of the Korán. They cite respecting him, the following traditionary saying of the prophet, "I have seen the name of Othman written on the gate of paradise; I have seen it marked behind the throne of God, and on the wings of the archangel Gabriel." The Schiites regard him as a usurper, but they do not execrate his memory so much as that of Omar.

At first the horror inspired by this murder was so great, that all parties were reduced to silence. The surviving companions of Mohammed took advantage of this interval of tranquillity, and nominated Ali fourth Khaliph.

Ali was the son of Abu Táleb, that uncle of Mohammed who had so faithfully watched over his childhood. He had been the first to acknowledge the divine mission of his cousin, and he ever manifested the most devoted attachment to his person. When Mohammed fled from Mecca, Ali disguised himself in the prophet's robes, and placed himself on his bed, that the Meccans might not suspect his escape. When he followed his patron to Medina, he married the prophet's favourite daughter Fatima, by whom he had several children. Mohammed on many occasions showed a strong love for Ali; he appointed him his lieutenant in his first expedition against the Greeks, at Tabúc, and during occasional absence, intrusted to him the government of Medina. It is supposed, on very plausible grounds, that Ali was actually nominated his successor by the

prophet, but that Ayesha prevented the circumstance from being known. This injustice was deeply felt by the son of Abu Táleb and his partisans, but particularly by Mohammed's relations, who thought themselves neglected by the three first Khaliphs. In vain, however, did his friends endeavour to persuade Ali to attempt the forcible seizure of the reins of government; he replied constantly, that he would never reign except by the free suffrages of the Mussulmans. During the reign of Omar, his loyalty was so notorious, that he was appointed governor of Arabia during the Khaliph's absence at Jerusalem; he refused to join those who conspired against Othman, and one of his sons was severely wounded in defence of that sovereign. Finally, when elected, he very reluctantly consented to accept the dignity of Khaliph, which had twice already proved fatal to its possessors. Though the character of Ali was ardent and impetuous, his disposition was mild, and his temper placable; he was deficient in that prudence so necessary in a sovereign, especially at the stormy period in which he reigned; repeated disappointments had in some degree soured his temper, he regarded himself as the victim of long injustice, and viewed with no favourable regards, the great body of Mussulmans that had so long supported his rivals. These sentiments were unwisely strengthened by the inconsiderate zeal of the greater proportion of his friends; they regarded his elevation as identified with their own, and hurried him into imprudent measures, which ruined him and themselves.

Ali commenced his reign by deposing all the governors of the provinces. Amongst these were several men of great influence; especially Moáwiyah, the son of that Abu Sofíán who had been long the chief of the Meccan idolaters, and the most bitter enemy of Mohammed. After Mecca had

submitted, Mohammed made Moáwiyah one of his private secretaries; the Khaliph Omar had raised him to the government of Syria, and he had now ruled that important province during fifteen years. Crafty, subtle, intriguing, possessing inflexible obstinacy, and boundless ambition, he received Ali's mandate for his deposition with violent indignation. As he was a near relation of Othman, he resolved to declare himself his avenger, and, though that sovereign had left children, Moáwiyah claimed to be his heir and successor. He found allies in the centre of Arabia; while the Syrians were preparing to take arms, Ayesha, with a numerous body of followers, was already in the field. Though she had notoriously shared in the conspiracy against Othman, she now proclaimed herself his avenger, and she denounced Ali as the author of his death.

Joined with her were Talha and Zobeir, two of Mohammed's old companions, who well knew the falsehood of Ayesha's allegations. They had been the foremost to swear allegiance to Ali, but not having obtained all that they desired, they ranged themselves in the ranks of the rebels, to whom their presence gave additional confidence. The obligation of their oaths they evaded by the expiatory offerings prescribed in the fifth chapter of the Korán, which is one of the greatest blots on the character both of the book and its author.

Ayesha, contrary to the established custom of Arabia, led her forces in person, mounted on a strong camel, and protected by an escort of picked men. When she approached a small village named Jowáb, all the dogs in the place rushed out and barked at her with great fury. This she regarded as an evil omen, and declared that Mohammed had told her, "One of my wives, engaged in an evil design, shall be attacked by dogs in Jowáb; take care that you be

not the wicked person." Full of alarm, she wished to return; but Zobeir and Talha, knowing how important was her presence, suborned fifty false witnesses to swear that the village was never known by the name of Jowáb. As she still seemed anxious to depart, they spread a report that the army of Ali had gained a position in their rear, and consequently that she could not return in safety. "This," say the Moslem historians, "was the first public lie told since the promulgation of Islám."

The two armies met at Khoraiba, a place in the neighbourhood of Bassorah; Ali's forces amounted to twenty thousand men, all picked soldiers, those of Ayesha were more numerous, but they were, for the most part, raw and undisciplined levies. After a brief contest, the rebels were routed; Talha fell wounded mortally from his horse, and with his dying breath besought pardon from God for his share in the murder of Othman, and his treachery to Ali. When told of this, the generous conqueror exclaimed, that God had granted Talha time for repentance before receiving his soul into heaven. Zobeir escaped from the battle, but was overtaken by his pursuers on the road to Mecca, who cut off his head, and brought it as an acceptable present to the Khaliph. Ali expressed so much indignation at the sight, that the bearers assailed him with bitter reproaches, saying, "You are the evil genius of the Mussulmans; you consign to hell those who deliver you from your enemies, and you name those who attack your men companions of Satan." The victory, however, could not be regarded as complete until Ayesha had been forced to submission; the strictest orders were given to respect her person, but also it was desired that no pains should be spared to make her prisoner. Seventy men had their hands cut off attempting to seize her camel by the bridle; the pavilion in which she

sat was stuck so full of arrows that it resembled a porcupine ; at length a soldier cut the back sinew of the camel, the animal fell helpless on his knees, and Ayesha remained a captive. Mohammed, the son of Abú-Bekr, was sent to take charge of her ; she loaded him with the fiercest invectives, but he did not make any reply. When she was brought before Ali, he received her in the most courteous manner, recommended her to forbear from meddling with public affairs for the future, and sent her under a faithful escort to Medina. Thus ended the first great battle between the opponents and the partisans of Ali ; it is frequently called by Eastern writers "the battle of the camel," from the animal on which Ayesha rode ; it was the prelude to many, and fearful scenes of slaughter.

The rebellion in Syria next engaged the attention of Ali ; Moáwiyah had not only rejected his offers of accommodation, but denied his title to the Khaliphate : in order to justify this rebellion, and strike the eyes of the multitude, Moáwiyah procured the bloody robe in which Othman was murdered, and caused it to be borne in solemn procession through the streets of Damascus. This sight so powerfully inflamed the popular passions, that though it was then the middle of summer, more than thirty thousand persons bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to taste fresh water until they had avenged the death of Othman. Among the leading partisans of the Syrian governor was Amrú, the conqueror of Egypt, who seemed to share the general excitement, though well aware that Ali was innocent of the imputed crimes.

The hostile forces met in the plains of Safféin, on the western banks of the Euphrates, not far from the city of Racca. Neither leader was prepared for general action, and ninety days were wasted in desultory skirmishes between

divisions. His impetuous valour gave Ali the victory in most of these encounters; he challenged his rival to decide the dispute by single combat; but Moáwiyah would not venture to enter the lists. When urged to do so by Amrú, he replied, "You aspire to the Khaliphate yourself, and desire to enjoy it after I am gone." The last action at Sufféin continued all night, to the great disadvantage of the Syrians; they would have been driven from their very entrenchments, had not the crafty Moáwiyah made an appeal to the superstitious feelings of Ali's followers. He ordered some of his men to place copies of the Korán on the points of their lances, and, advancing to the front of the lines, exclaim, "This is the book that ought to decide all differences between us; this is the Word of God, and the code of our faith; it expressly forbids the shedding of Moslem blood." Coarse as was the artifice, it had the most complete success; the troops of Irák, the flower of the Khaliph's forces, threw down their arms, and clamorously demanded that a negotiation should be commenced. In vain did Ali command them to continue the fight, assuring them that Moáwiyah disregarded the Korán, and was equally the enemy of God and man; the soldiers clamorously replied, that they would not fight against the book of God, and threatened the Khaliph with the fate of Othman.

From the moment that he was checked in the midst of victory, Ali seems to have despaired of the issue of the contest; when required to name an arbitrator, he coldly answered, "He that is not at liberty, cannot give his advice; you must now conduct the affair as you think proper." His soldiers took him at his word, and nominated, on the part of the Khaliph, Abú Músa, whose chief merit was, that he had written a faulty copy of the Korán, and whose fidelity had been long more than suspected.

Moáwiyah appointed a much more subtle negotiator, Amrú, universally regarded as the most able statesman of the period. The arbitrators were enjoined to decide the dispute according to the Korán and the traditions of the prophet, and to pronounce judgment in the next month of Ramadan.

Amrú persuaded Abú Músa, that the best plan that could be adopted, was to declare the throne vacant, and proceed to a new election. When the day for giving judgment arrived, Abú Músa, as had been agreed, first ascended the pulpit, and with a loud voice pronounced the following words; "I depose both Ali and Moáwiyah from the Khaliphate, in the same manner that I draw this ring from my finger." Amrú next ascended, and said: "You have heard Abú Músa pronounce the deposition of Ali: I confirm it; and I invest Moáwiyah with the supreme authority in the same manner that I now draw this ring upon my finger. I hail him as the legal successor of Othman, the avenger of his blood, and the most worthy of the Moslems to command the faithful."

This unexpected declaration created a violent tumult. Abú Músa accused Amrú of breach of faith, called him a wretch, a dog, an unclean beast, and imprecated on his grave all nameless desecrations; Amrú replied, that his co-arbitrator was a learned blockhead, a jackass loaded with books, and the grandfather of stupidity; at the same time, he stoutly maintained his sentence.

This event was fatal to the cause of Ali; his soldiers, who had forced him to commence the imprudent negotiation, felt that their fidelity must for the future be suspected, and began to desert in whole battalions; a great part of those who remained faithful, accused him of weakness, reproaching him for having submitted his unquestionable rights to arbitration. The new and formidable

sect of the Khavaredschites, that is, "the deserters," appeared in the midst of Arabia, declaring that both the rivals had forfeited their right to reign, by submitting to human judgment what God alone should determine. It was necessary to march a large army against these fanatics, and the time which Ali wasted in their subjugation, was employed by Moáwiyah in new conquests. It would be difficult to form an idea of the vindictive rage which filled all parties at this period. Mohammed, the son of Abú-Bekr, whose presence at the murder of Othman has been already mentioned, was a zealous partisan of Ali; he was taken prisoner by Moáwiyah, and notwithstanding the respect due to his father, and his sister Ayesha, he was sewed up in an ass's skin, and burned alive. Anathemas and curses were hurled against each other, by the rivals, at every place of public worship; every Friday, Ali, from the pulpit, proclaimed Moáwiyah a rebel, an impious wretch, an enemy of God and his prophet; while the Syrian governor treated the name of Ali with equal contumely. But Moáwiyah did not confine himself to a war of male-diction; he gained some advantage over his rival almost every day; subdued his provinces, defeated his armies, corrupted his ministers, and procured the destruction of those who remained faithful to his falling fortunes. Among those who deserted the cause of the unfortunate, was Okail, Ali's brother; his only excuse for this infamous act was, that he had not been treated with sufficient respect.

We have already mentioned the view taken of affairs, by the fanatical Khavaredschites. Three of this sect happened to meet at Mecca, and after some discourse agreed, that if the three chief causes of discontent were removed, namely, Ali, Moáwiyah, and Amrú, the affairs of the Mussulmans would soon be restored to their ancient

flourishing condition. Finally, they resolved to devote themselves for the common advantage, and agreed, that on a stated day, one should slay Ali at Cufa; another, Moá-wiyah at Damascus; and the third, Amrú in Egypt. The attempt was made: Amrú on that day did not appear in public; Moáwiyah escaped with a few slight wounds; Ali alone received a mortal stroke. The assassin on his arrival at Cufa, went to lodge with a woman, whose brother and husband had been slain by the Khaliph's soldiers in battle. She was eager to avenge their death; she promised her hand to the assassin, if he succeeded, and persuaded two of her friends to aid him in the attempt.

Scarcely had Ali entered the mosque, when the three threw themselves on him together, and wounded him in several places: one escaped, the other was slain by the guards; the third was brought a prisoner before Ali. "What could have induced thee to attempt such an atrocious crime?" asked the dying prince. "I wished to avenge the calamities you have brought upon the faithful," was the stern reply. Ali survived his wounds only three days: it is a curious fact, that his death took place towards the close of the thirty years, which Mohammed had predicted would be the fatal period of the Khaliphate.

Ali ordered, that if he survived his wounds, the life of the assassin should be spared; "but if I die," he continued, "send him after me, that I may have an opportunity of accusing him before the throne of God." After the Khaliph's death, the hands and feet of the wretch were cut off; his eyes burned out with hot irons; his tongue torn from the roots, and his mutilated body cast into the flames. Such was the fanaticism of the times, that a poet dared to celebrate the detestable murder of Ali in stanzas to the following effect:

O God ! how truly noble was the deed,
Which from a wicked king thy chosen freed,
O worthy blow ! dealt by a noble hand ;
O stroke, which Heaven's high favour must command !
To thee avenger, humbly shall I pray
When called to answer at the judgment-day :
Thy glorious deed shall then with weight prevail,
And turn the balance of the awful scale.

Moáwiyah and his successors long continued to curse Ali as an usurper after his death; he was denounced in every mosque subject to their sway, as worse than an infidel. The Khaliph Omar, son of Abd-al-aziz, sixty years after, resolved to put an end to this scandal: but to prevent any discontent among his followers, he devised the following expedient. A Jew, according to a concerted plan, appeared in the hall of audience, when crowded with the Saracenic nobility, and demanded the daughter of the Khaliph in marriage. Omar pretended to shudder with horror, while a hundred voices were raised to denounce the audacity of the proposal. The Jew continued; "Your prophet Mohammed gave his beloved child to one, who, according to your accounts was worse than the worst of infidels; why should you hesitate to grant me yours?" The Khaliph pretended to be embarrassed by the reply, and looked for advice to his council. Most of those present were of opinion that an insult was offered to Mohammed himself, by pronouncing a curse on his son-in-law; and it was resolved, that for the future, instead of the anathema, the following verse of the Korán should be used: "Forgive us, LORD, our sins, pardon likewise all our brethren, who make profession of the same faith that we do ourselves." But the successors of Omar, as we shall see in the next chapter, did not imitate him in respecting the misfortunes of the house of Ali.

Ali possessed great military talents, but no political skill. Speaking of their contest, Moáwiyah said, "Two things gave me the advantage,—my rival was of an open disposition, I was impenetrable; Ali commanded undisciplined troops, mine obeyed the slightest signal." He possessed a more than ordinary share of the learning of the times; frequently recited extempore stanzas, and always displayed a ready eloquence. A copy of a treatise written by him, on the magical sciences, is said to be preserved in the imperial library of Constantinople.

The respect which the Shiites have for the memory of Ali borders on idolatry; but this will be more appropriately noticed in the next chapter. All the Mussulmans, however, now join in commiserating his calamities, and blaming the violence of which he was the victim. Every time that they pronounce his name, they accompany it with the benediction, "May God render his face glorious!"

From the contest between Ali and Moáwiyah, the first of the Ommiad Khaliphs, arose the distinction of the Mohammedans into Sunnites and Shiites. The chief points at issue between them, are the following: 1. The Shiites, or as they call themselves, the Adalyihans, or "lovers of justice," assert that the three first Khaliphs were usurpers; the Sunnites declare that they were legitimate monarchs, elected according to the *sonna*, or traditional law of the prophet. 2. The Shiites regard Ali as the equal of Mohammed; some even assert his superiority, but the Sunnites deny that he possessed any special dignity. 3. The Shiites assert that the Korán is made void by the authority attributed to tradition; the Sunnites say that tradition is necessary to complete and explain the doctrines of the Korán.

The Turks, Egyptians, and Arabs belong to the Son-

nite sect; the tenets of the Shiites are professed by the Persians, a great portion of the Tartars, and several of the Mohammedan princes in India.

Ali was buried at Cufa, but the exact place of his sepulchre cannot be determined. A magnificent mosque has been erected in the neighbourhood of the city, which is called Mesched-Ali, the place of Ali's martyrdom; it is, to this day, a favourite object of pilgrimage to devout Mussulmans.

The history of the celebrated Timúr furnishes us with two curious examples of the desire which the Shiites show to avenge the fate of their patron. When this ferocious conqueror, whose pleasure it was to enter into lengthened controversy with his captives, and to call himself the friend of Ali's family, had conquered Aleppo, he assembled all the Mohammedan doctors in the city, knowing them to be Sunnites, and demanded of them, "What think you of Ali, of Moáwiyah, and his son Yezid?" They remained long in silence, fearing to compromise themselves; at length, one of them evasively replied, "All those whom you mention, contended for the true faith, and extended the glory of God." Tamerlane instantly burst into a fury, and exclaimed, "Ali was the rightful Khaliph and Imám, the legitimate sovereign of the faithful: Moáwiyah was a tyrant and usurper, his son Yezid a monster of iniquity. It seems that you persevere in the iniquity of your forefathers, who supported the cause of the abandoned Yezid, the cruel murderer of Hossein (Ali's son)." And this served as a pretext for refusing the doctors of the law at Aleppo the usual exemption from military execution.

Timúr, anxious to represent the desolation that he spread over Syria, as a punishment inflicted by the Divine command on a guilty land, repeated the same question at Da-

mascus. Not receiving an answer, he informed his soldiers that they were commissioned to punish the Syrians for the impious wars that they had waged against Ali and his descendants. Thus the stimulus of fanaticism was added to their former cruelty and barbarity.

It must, however, be added, in justice, that on one occasion, this predilection of Timúr led him to perform an act of mercy; when his great enemy Sheikh-Ali had been completely defeated, and driven forth from his home as a fugitive, Timúr, as he tells us himself, in his extraordinary autobiography*, pardoned him for the sake of the name he bore, and permitted him to return, and enjoy his paternal inheritance.

The progress of the Mohammedan creed was, we have said, singularly rapid, under the first four Khaliphs; and we have attributed this to the fact of its having been admirably adapted to the wants and wishes of those to whom it was preached. Of this, we have a very curious proof in the autobiography of Timúr, a work of extraordinary interest, published by the Oriental Translation Committee. Teragay, the father of the imperial author, gives his son the following account of the motives that induced a Tartar emir to adopt the Mohammedan creed; it will be seen, that they are such as would naturally suggest themselves to the natives of Central and Western Asia.

“The first of our family who had the honour of conversion to the faith of Islám, was Kerachâr-Nuyan, who was the son-in-law of Jagtay-Khân; as he was a sensible man, he of his own accord adopted the faith of Mohammed, and said to his family and people, ‘When I look around me

* It is called the *Mulfuzat-Timury*; and has been translated by Major Charles Stewart. The Institutes of Timúr were previously translated and published in Oxford.

in the universe, I see but one world, yet I am of opinion that there are other worlds besides this; but I am also convinced, that there is only one God who hath created all these worlds, and who is all-sufficient to rule and direct all these worlds; but as He has chosen this world as his special dominion, He has deemed it requisite to have ministers (to instruct mankind); He hath, therefore, chosen Mohammed to be his *Vizier* in this world, and as it was requisite that Mohammed should have ministers (to extend his religion), He hath appointed the holy race of Khaliphs to this dignity.’”

CHAPTER VII.

THE FAMILY OF ALI;—THE TWELVE IMAMS.

IN the second chapter of this history, we noticed how frequently we find in the ancient Persian religion, the notion of a *Bodhisatwa*, or union in the same person of the Divine and the human nature. We have also mentioned, that the sect of Mohammedans devoted to Ali is that which the Persians have adopted. When the faith of Islám was forced upon the Persian nation by the sanguinary Omar, it was declared by the conqueror, that all who did not receive it with implicit obedience should be put to the sword. Such a summary process of conversion left the real tenets of the great majority of the nation unaltered; from old associations, they began to regard the Imáms, or chiefs of the faith, as Bodhisatwas; and, as we shall have occasion to notice hereafter, this principle pervades all the Schiite sects; the chief difference between them being as to the number of incarnations. Ali is reckoned to be the first Imám; his partisans declare that, though human force prevented him from enjoying temporal power, his spiritual dignity was the gift of God, and could not, therefore, be affected by the successive usurpations of Abú-Bekr, Omar, and Othman. The Schiite notion of an Imám, is precisely the same as that which the Tibetians form of their Grand Lama, and the Burmese of their Bodhisatwas. Many think that Ali is not dead, but that he will return again to reign upon earth, when men, by their docility and submission, will cause him to forget the calamities which he had to suffer in his former career. Others, identifying him with the Divinity, pretend, that he often shows himself in

the clouds to the enemies of his name, “brandishing the lightnings of heaven in their faces, and terrifying their souls by the crashes of his thunder.” It is quite a common proverb in Persia, “Though I do not believe Ali to be God, I believe that he is not far from being so.” In all portraits of him, he is represented with his face covered, because, as they allege, the glory of his countenance is too bright for mortal eye to behold.

A great number of the Schiites declare the first Imám superior to the prophet; some say, that Ali was chosen by God to propagate Islámism, but that the angel Gabriel, by mistake, delivered the letter to Mohammed. Others pretend, that Mohammed was ordered to deliver his revelations in Ali’s name, but that, seduced by pride and ambition, he falsely proclaimed himself the chosen apostle of God. Sháh Hossein, one of the last monarchs of the Suffavean dynasty in Persia, described himself on his seal, as “the vilest of the dogs of Ali.” The signet of several other monarchs of this dynasty, bore a Persian quatrain to the following effect :—

He who in Ali places not his trust,
 Were it myself, myself I should detest.
 He who at Ali’s gate is not as dust,
 On him, though Gabriel’s self, may earth be pressed.

But the following version of a popular Persian hymn to Ali, will show the reader, better than any dissertation, the absurd and blasphemous lengths to which the Schiites carry their reverence for the first Imám.

Beside thy glories, O most great !
 Dim are the stars and weak is fate.
 Compared to thy celestial light,
 The very sun is dark as night;
 Thine edicts destiny obeys,
 The sun shows but thy mental rays.

Thy merits form a boundless sea
That rolls on to eternity:
To heaven its mighty waves ascend,
O'er it the skies admiring bend,
And when they view its waters clear,
The wells of Eden dark appear.

The treasures that the earth conceals,
The wealth that human toil reveals,
The jewels of the gloomy mine,
Those that on regal circlets shine;
Are idle toys and worthless shows,
Compared with what thy grace bestows.

Mysterious being! None can tell
The attributes in thee that dwell;
None can thine essence comprehend;
To thee should every mortal bend—
For 'tis by thee that man is given
To know the high behests of heaven.

The ocean-floods round earth that roll,
And lave the shores from pole to pole,—
Beside the eternal fountain's stream
A single drop, a bubble seem:
That fount's a drop beside the sea
Of grace and love, we find in Thee.

On the death of Ali (A.D. 661), his eldest son Hassan was proclaimed Khaliph and Imám in Irák; the former title he was forced to resign to Moáwiyah; the latter, or spiritual dignity, his followers regarded as inalienable. His rival granted him a pension, and permitted him to retire into private life. After nine years, passed, for the most part, in devotional exercise, he was poisoned by his wife Jaadah, who was bribed to perpetrate this execrable crime by Yezid, the son of Moáwiyah. When he was at the point of death, the physician told his brother Hossein, that his bowels were consumed with poison. Hossein demanded of Hassan to name the murderer, that such a

crime might not escape unpunished; but the dying prince replied, "O brother! the life of this world is made up of nights that vanish away. Let the murderer alone, until we both meet at the judgment-seat of God, where justice will assuredly be done." The second Imám was a feeble prince: of his father's good qualities, he only inherited his piety and his merciful disposition. It is reported, that when he surrendered his dignity of Moáwiyah, he proposed that the anathemas pronounced against his father in the mosques should be discontinued, but that he had afterwards the weakness to stipulate only that they should not be pronounced in his presence. Hence, one party have named him "the disgrace of the Mussulmans," while the ardent Schiites call him "the young prince of Paradise."

Most Mohammedan writers date the commencement of Moáwiyah's reign from the abdication of Hassan (A.D. 669), and declare that this is the term of the period during which the world was subject to legitimate authority; regarding the four first Khaliphs as monarchs *de jure*, and all others as only sovereigns *de facto*. According to the Schiite doctrine, Hossein, the second son of Ali and Fatima, inherited the dignity of Imám. He had been born prematurely, which some of his followers represented as a miraculous circumstance; Mohammed had shown great affection for him in infancy, and some say, predicted for him good fortune, which he never attained. Hossein had endeavoured to dissuade Hassan from resigning in favour of Moáwiyah, but when the treaty was concluded, he was foremost in showing the example of obedience. Not only did he regularly attend to pay his respects at the court of Damascus, but he actually served in the Khaliph's army when the Saracens made their first attack on Constantinople. On the death of Moáwiyah (A.D. 679), his son Yezid, who

succeeded, having provoked public indignation by his luxury, debauchery, and impiety, Hossein was persuaded, by the discontented people of Irák, to make an attempt for the recovery of his hereditary rights. The inhabitants of Cufa and Bassorah were foremost in their professions of zeal for the house of Ali, and sent Hossein a list of more than one hundred and twenty-four thousand persons, who, they said, were ready to take up arms. Hossein did not take warning from the inconstancy and treachery which these very persons had shown in their conduct towards his father and brother; assembling a small troop of his personal friends, and accompanied by a part of his family, he departed from Medina, the place of his residence, and was soon engaged in crossing the desert. But whilst he was on his journey, Yezid's governor in Irák discovered the meditated revolt, capitally punished the leaders of the conspiracy, and so terrified the rest, that they were afraid to move. When Hossein arrived near the banks of the Euphrates, instead of finding an allied army, he discovered that his further progress was checked by the overwhelming forces of the enemy. Determined, however, to persevere, he gave permission to all who pleased, to retreat while there was yet time, and continued his route to Cufa, accompanied only by seventy-two persons. But every step increased his difficulties, and he attempted to return when it was too late. At length, he was surrounded by the troops of the Khaliph in the arid plains of Kerbela, his followers were cut off from their supply of water, and when he offered to negotiate, he was told that no terms would be made, but that he should surrender at discretion. Twenty-four hours were granted him for deliberation.

Hossein's choice was soon made; he deemed death preferable to submission; but he counselled his friends to pro-

vide for their safety, either by surrender or escape. All replied, that they preferred dying with their beloved leader. The only matter now to be considered was, how they could sell their lives most dearly; they closed their tents, fortified their little encampment with a trench, and then tranquilly awaited the event.

That night Hossein slept soundly, using for a pillow the pommel of his sword. During his sleep, he dreamed that Mohammed appeared to him, and predicted that they should meet the next day in paradise. When morning dawned, he related the dream to his sister Zeinab, who had accompanied him on his fatal expedition. She burst into a passion of tears, and exclaimed, "Alas! alas! Woe worth the day! What a destiny is ours! My father is dead! My mother is dead! My brother Hassan is dead! and the measure of our calamities is not yet full." Hossein tried to console her; "Why should you weep?" he said; "did we not come on earth to die? My father was more worthy than I—my mother was more worthy than I—my brother was more worthy than I. They are all dead! Why should not we be ready to follow their example?" He then strictly enjoined his family to make no lamentation for his approaching martyrdom; telling them that a patient submission to the Divine decrees was the conduct most pleasing to God and his prophet.

When morning appeared, Hossein, having washed and perfumed himself, as if preparing for a banquet, mounted his steed, and addressed his followers in terms of endearing affection, that drew tears from the eyes of the gallant warriors. Then opening the Korán, he read the following verse; "O God! be thou my refuge in suffering, and my hope in affliction." But the soldiers of Yezid were reluctant to assail the favourite grandson of the prophet; they

demanding of their generals to allow him to draw water from the Euphrates, a permission which would not have been refused to beasts and infidels. "Let us be cautious," they exclaimed, "of raising our hands against him who was carried in the arms of God's apostle; it would be, in fact, to fight against God himself." So strong were their feelings, that thirty cavaliers deserted to Hossein, resolved to share with him the glories of martyrdom.

But Yezid's generals shared not in these sentiments: they affected to regard Hossein as an enemy of Islám; they forced their soldiers forward with blows, and exclaimed, "War to those who abandon the true religion, and separate themselves from the council of the faithful." Hossein replied, "It is you who have abandoned the true religion, it is you who have severed yourselves from the assembly of the faithful. Ah! when your souls shall be separated from your bodies, you will learn, too late, which party has incurred the penalty of eternal condemnation." Notwithstanding their vast superiority, the Khaliph's forces hesitated to engage men determined on death; they poured in their arrows from a distance, and soon dismounted the little troop of Hossein's cavalry.

When the hour of noon arrived, Hossein solicited a suspension of arms during the time appointed for the meridian prayer. This trifling boon was conceded with difficulty; the generals of Yezid asking, "How a wretch like him could venture to address the Deity?" and adding the vilest reproaches, to which Hossein made no reply. The Persian traditions relate a fabulous circumstance, designed to exalt the character of Hossein, though fiction itself cannot increase the deep interest of his history. They tell us, that whilst he was upon his knees, the king of the Genii appeared to him, and offered, for the sake of his father

Ali, to disperse his enemies in a moment. "No," replied the generous Hossein, "what use is there in fighting any longer? I am but a guest of one breath in this transitory world; my relatives and companions are all gone, and what will it profit me to remain behind? I long for nothing, now, save my martyrdom; therefore, depart thou, and may the Lord recompense and bless thee." The Ginn was so deeply affected by the reply, that his soul exhibited human weakness, and he departed weeping and lamenting.

When the hour of prayer was passed, the combat was renewed; Hossein soon found himself alone; one of his sons, six of his brethren, and several of his nephews, lay dead around him; the rest of his followers were either killed or grievously wounded. Hitherto he had escaped unhurt, for every one dreaded to raise a hand against the grandson of Mohammed; at length a soldier, more daring than the rest, gave him a severe wound in the head; faint with the loss of blood, he staggered to the door of his tent, and with a burst of parental affection, which at such a moment must have been mingled with unspeakable bitterness, took up his infant child and began to caress it. Whilst the babe was lisping out an inquiry as to the cause of his father's emotion, it was struck dead by an arrow in Hossein's arms. When the blood of the innocent bubbling over his bosom disclosed this new calamity, Hossein cast the body towards heaven, exclaiming, "O Lord! if thou refusest us thy succour, at least spare those who have not yet sinned, and turn thy wrath upon the heads of the guilty."

Parched by a burning thirst, Hossein made a desperate effort to reach the Euphrates; but when he stooped to drink, he was struck by an arrow in the mouth, and at the same moment one of his nephews, who came to embrace him for the last time, had his hand cut off by the blow of a

sabre. Hossein, now the sole survivor of his party, threw himself into the midst of the enemy, and fell beneath a thousand weapons. The officers of Yezid barbarously mangled the corpse of the unfortunate prince; they cut off his head, and sent it to the Khaliph.

On the third day after the battle, Hossein's two sisters, and his only surviving son Ali, were sent to Syria; Yezid at first treated them very harshly, but finding that this conduct excited the general indignation of his subjects, he allowed them to return home. When they reached Medina, the whole city was filled with mourning; one of Hossein's cousins recited an ode reproaching the Medinese for not having protected the family of Mohammed; though its poetic merits were not great, it produced a very powerful effect. The following is a translation of this singular composition :—

Tell me, friends, what shall you say,
On the awful judgment-day ?
When Mohammed asks you, " Where
Are those trusted to your care ?
Where his offspring—where his wives—
Dearer than a thousand lives ?"

Bound by many a festering chain,
Some in dungeons dark remain ;
On Kerbela's barren strand
Others lie, a reeking band,
Torn with wounds and stained with mud,
Weltering in their own heart's blood.

When before the judgment-seat
You the holy prophet meet,
He shall ask, if thus you show
The gratitude you justly owe,
For all the benefits bestowed
By him whose bounty freely flowed.

The death of Hossein was severely revenged; most of those who shared in his murder perished miserably, and the treatment he received was the pretence for several insurrections. One insurgent chief, Al Mokhtár, boasted that he had immolated fifty thousand enemies of the house of Ali.

The anniversary of Hossein's martyrdom, in the month Mohurrum, is celebrated with extraordinary splendour both in Persia and India. The solemnity lasts ten days, during which the Shiites abstain from every thing that could suggest notions of joy or pleasure. Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali, in her highly interesting portraiture of Mohammedanism in India, gives a graphic description of the Mohurrum, from which we extract the following curious particulars.

"I have been present," says the fair authoress, "when the effect produced by the superior oratory and gestures of a Maulvee (reading the history of the house of Ali), has almost terrified me; the profound grief evinced in his tears and groans, being piercing and apparently sincere. I have even witnessed blood issuing from the breasts of sturdy men, who beat themselves simultaneously as they ejaculated the names 'Hassan!' 'Hossein!' for ten minutes, and occasionally for a longer period, in that part of the service called Mortem." "In commemorating this remarkable event in Mussulman history, the expressions of grief manifested by the ladies are far greater, and appear to me more lasting, than with the other sex: indeed, I never could have given credit to the extent of their bewailings, without witnessing, as I have done for many years, the season for tears and profound grief return with the month of Mohurrum. In sorrowing for the martyred Imáms they seem to forget their private griefs, the bereavement of a beloved object even is almost overlooked, in the dutiful remembrance of Hassan and Hossein at this season; and

I have had opportunities of observing this triumph of religious feelings in women who are remarkable for their affectionate attachment to their children, husbands, and parents:—they tell me, ‘We must not indulge selfish sorrows of our own, whilst the prophet’s family alone have a right to our tears.’ My poor old Ayah (maid-servant) resolves on not allowing a drop of water, or any liquid, to pass her lips during the ten days’ mourning; as she says,—‘Her Imám, Hossein, and his family, suffered from thirst at Kerbela, why should such a creature as she is be indulged with water?’ This shows the temper of the people generally; my Ayah is a very ignorant old woman, yet she respects the memory of her Imám.”

A magnificent mosque was erected over the place where the body of Hossein was interred; the place is named *Mesched Hossein*, that is, “the place of Hossein’s martyrdom;” it is to this day a favourite resort of pilgrims. The Shiites devoutly believe that the martyr’s head, after having worked several miracles, went from Egypt, and joined itself to his body in Kerbela; one of the days of Mohurrum is dedicated to the commemoration of this event. A curious tradition respecting Hossein’s head has been preserved by Imám Ismail: “When Hossein’s head was sent to be presented to Yezid, the escort that guarded it, halting for the night in the city of Mosul, placed it in a box, which they locked up in a temple. One of the sentinels, in the midst of the night, looking through a chink in one of the doors, saw a man of immense stature, with a white and venerable beard, take Hossein’s head out of the box, kiss it affectionately, and weep over it. Soon after, a crowd of venerable sages arrived, each of whom kissed the pallid lips and wept bitterly. Fearing that these people might convey the head away, he unlocked the door and entered. Immedi-

ately, one of the number came up, gave him a violent slap on the face, and said, "The prophets have come to pay a morning visit to the head of the martyr. Whither dost thou venture so disrespectfully?"—The blow left a black mark on his cheek. In the morning he related the circumstances to the commander of the escort, and showed his cheek, on which the impression of the hand and fingers was plainly perceptible.

Hossein was naturally of a dark and melancholy disposition, as if he had some presentiment of his untimely end. He was, like his father, remarkable for piety; his biographers say that he paid his adorations to the Most High a thousand times every day. He once asked his father if he loved him; Ali replied, that he loved him tenderly. Again he asked, "Dost thou love God?" Ali answered in the affirmative. Upon this Hossein said, "Two true affections cannot subsist together in the same heart." Ali was so moved by these words, that he burst into a passion of tears. Hossein, to comfort him, continued, "Whether would you rather be guilty of infidelity or witness my death?" Ali replied, "I would sooner deliver up my beloved son to death, than abandon the faith." "Then," said Hossein, "by this test, you may see that your love for me is only natural affection, but that you love God with the true love of the inmost soul."

Ali, the son of Hossein, was the fourth Imám; though, during his youth, the friends of his family seemed disposed to regard his uncle Mohammed Hanefia as their chief. Ali was about twelve years of age when he accompanied his father to the fatal field of Kerbela. So deep an impression did this disaster make upon his mind, that he refused to take any share in public affairs, and dissuaded his friends from making any efforts in his favour. During his retire-

ment, the people of Medina revolted against Yezid, who sent a powerful army, under Meslem Ebn Okba, to suppress the rebellion. Meslem took the city by assault, and gave it to be plundered by his soldiers; the surviving companions of the prophet and their children were put to the sword, and all who had taken an active part in the insurrection were cruelly butchered. Mecca was besieged, and part of its celebrated temple destroyed; it would have shared the fate of Medina, had not the news of the Khaliph's death recalled the army to Syria. By Yezid's special directions, Meslem treated Ali with all possible respect, and sent him, escorted by a guard of honour, to a place of safety. The remainder of the Imám's life was spent in devotional exercises; from his constancy in prayer, he has been named "The Imám of the carpet," because the Mussulmans usually kneel on a square piece of carpet; "the possessor of callosities," from his body having become deformed through his frequent devotional prostrations, and "the glory of pious men." He died, greatly revered but little known (A. D. 712), and was succeeded by his eldest son Mohammed.

The life of Mohammed, the fifth Imám, was as tranquil and retired as that of his predecessors; he devoted himself to the study of the sciences, and, of course, was supposed, in an age of ignorance, to have paid particular attention to magic. For these reasons, the Shiites call him, "the possessor of the secret," and "the extensive;" they also name him "the director," because, in an age of heresy, he directed the Mussulmans in the right path. During this period, Persian Mohammedanism was further corrupted by the introduction of new Buddhistic ideas. The doctrine of the metempsychosis, or the transmigration of the soul of one Chief of Religion into that of his successor, was applied

to the Imáms, as it has been from unknown time to the Lamas of Tibet. The Khaliph Heshám, alarmed at the progress of opinions which gave additional strength to the house of Ali, procured the murder of Mohammed by poison (A. D. 734). Some of the Shiites, however, believe that he is not yet dead, but that he wanders secretly over the earth, accompanied by Ali Ebn Táleb and the celebrated prophet Kedher.

Jaafar, the sixth Imám, succeeded to the spiritual dignity of his father Mohammed. Zeid, the brother of the late Imám, resolved to restore the temporal power of the house of Ali; and, assembling an army of more than ten thousand men in Irák, made himself master of Cúfa. But he found the Cúfans as unstable and faithless as they had proved in the time of his ancestors, Hossein and Ali. On the approach of the Khaliph's troops, commanded by Yusef Ebn Omar, they sought a pretext for abandoning Zeid, and demanded of him, what were his sentiments respecting Abú-Bekr and Omar? He replied, that he always had regarded them as good men. Upon this, they pretended, that he entertained heretical sentiments, and, consequently, had no right to their allegiance. Zeid had only fourteen companions when he was surrounded by the army of Yusef; even in these desperate circumstances he refused to surrender, but fell, gallantly fighting at the head of his brave companions, none of whom survived him. Yusef treated the senseless corpse with brutal indignity; Zeid's head was sent to the Khaliph, by whose command it was fixed on the walls of Damascus; his body, after being some time exposed on a gibbet, was burned, and the ashes scattered to the winds.

Soon after this, the dynasty of the Ommyad Khaliphs was subverted, and Merwán, the last sovereign of the

family, slain in Egypt. The Khaliphate was transferred to the Abasside family, descended from Al-Abbas, the uncle of Mohammed. Al-Saffah, the new Khaliph, was as jealous of the house of Ali as the descendants of Moáwiyah had been, and the Imáms continued to be exposed to suspicion and persecution.

We are told by the Shiites, that Jaafar's knowledge was little, if at all, inferior to that of Solomon; they say, that he wrote a supplement to the "Book of Fate," originally composed by Ali, and they still seek in its pages the interpretation of omens and prodigies. So great is their veneration for him, that an entire sect has been denominated Jaafarites, from their strong attachment to his memory. When the celebrated Nadir Shah proposed to assimilate the religion of the Persians to that of the Turks, and render the Shiite system a fifth orthodox sect, he proposed that the Imám Jaafar should be regarded as the head of the national faith; his efforts failed, as all efforts to conciliate rival creeds have uniformly done. Jaafar used to say to his disciples; "Converse with me whilst I remain amongst you, hereafter you shall have no one to give you instruction." From this circumstance, many of his disciples believed that he did not die, but was only removed from human sight like Edris and Kedher. Jaafar is commonly termed "the just," and "the brave prince;" he is a favourite hero of Oriental romance. He died A.D. 765.

We have now reached the celebrated age of the seventh Imám, when, from among the Shiites, issued a new sect, whose history is without a parallel in the annals of the world. Jaafar nominated his son Ismail his successor, but, on his premature death, he declared his second son Moussa his heir. Now, as Ismail had left children, those of the Shiites who regarded the Imámate as hereditary, denied

that Jaafar had a right to make a second nomination ; they formed a new sect called the Ismaelians, to which belonged the Fatimite Khaliphs of Egypt, who pretended to be descended from this Ismail, and the Assassins or followers of the Old Man of the Mountain, whose name was once so justly dreaded in Europe and Asia. But we shall devote the next chapter to the history of the Ismaelians, and must now return to the Schiite Imáms.

The Suffavean monarchs of Persia claiming to be descended from Moussa, have strenuously advocated his title to be the seventh Imám, and with such success, that no traces of the contrary opinion are now to be found in Persia. Soon after the accession of Moussa, an unsuccessful attempt to restore the temporal power of the house of Ali, in which he had no share, became to him the pregnant source of many calamities. Yáhya, a descendant of Hassan, the eldest son of Ali*, was persuaded to raise the standard of revolt against the Khaliph Haroun-al-Raschid, in the province of Ghilán ; and several of the discontented flocked to his standard. Haroun sent a large army under the command of Fadl, a general of the Barmecide family, against the insurgents. Yáhya surrendered on condition of receiving pardon and indemnity, which were readily conceded by the Khaliph. Yáhya removed to Bagdad, but was subsequently put to death by the suspicious monarch, having been falsely accused of meditating a new revolt. The historians add, that all his accusers were providentially punished by a miserable end. This was not the only instance in which Haroun exhibited the cruelty of cowardice ; he seized Moussa at Medina, had him con-

* His genealogy is thus given by the historians ; Yáhya, the son of Abd-allah, the son of Hassan II., the son of Hassan I., the son of Ali, the son of Abú-Táleb.

veyed in a covered litter to Bagdad, and after keeping him some time in confinement, caused him to be privately assassinated. Moussa is by some of the Schiites denominated "the weak," and by others, "the patient;" others, alluding to the persecutions he experienced, call him "the faithful guardian of the true belief." He was put to death, A.D. 799; it is a curious proof of the deference paid by the Khaliph to public opinion, that an inquest was held on the body of Moussa, the commissioners of which were bribed to return a false verdict.

Moussa's son Ali was the eighth Imám; he had accompanied his father to Bagdad, where he made several proselytes; and among others the grand vizier of the empire Al Fadl Ebn-Sahal. Through the vizier's influence, the Khaliph Al Mamún, the son of Haroun, invited Ali to court, gave him his daughter in marriage, and proclaimed him his successor in the empire. Moreover he commanded his troops to lay aside their black dress, the distinctive uniform of the house of Abbas, and to assume the green vests that characterize the descendants of Mohammed. Expresses announcing this change were sent to different parts of the empire. The descendants of Abbas, amounting, it is said, to thirty thousand souls, were filled with indignation; they resolved to depose Al Mamún, and proclaim his uncle Ibrahim emperor of the faithful. In consequence of this alarming intelligence, the Khaliph caused his vizier to be assassinated, and Ali to be privately poisoned. Ali died in the city of Tús in Khorassan; his tomb is denominated Mesched Ali, and since the period of the Suffavean dynasty has been a favourite object of pilgrimage to the Persians. Those monarchs proclaimed, that a pilgrimage thither was as meritorious as one to Mecca; crowds came in consequence from every quarter, a new

city named Mesched sprung up around the sepulchre, and Tús, deserted by its inhabitants, fell into decay. The murder of Ali occurred A.D. 816; from the Schiites he has received the epithet "beloved."

Mohammed, the son of Ali, was the ninth Imám; he lived in privacy at Bagdad, where he died at an early age (A.D. 835). On account of his great charity and benevolence, he is named "the generous."

Ali, the tenth Imám, was but a child when he succeeded his father; he was kept a close prisoner all his life in the city of Asker, by the Khaliph Motawakkel, the mortal enemy of the Schiites. To avoid suspicion, he pretended to devote himself entirely to study and religious exercises; but notwithstanding his caution, the jealous Khaliph ordered him to be poisoned (A.D. 868). From the place of his residence Ali is commonly called "the Askerite." This name is also given to his son and successor Hassan, who likewise perished by poison. Hassan bears in addition, the title of "liberator," because it was hoped he would have delivered his followers from the tyranny of the Khaliphs; he is likewise called, "the pure," in allusion to his inoffensive life, and "the torch," in reference to his brilliant literary talents.

Mohammed, the twelfth and last Imám, was but six months old when his father died; he was kept closely confined by the Khaliph, but after he had attained the age of twelve years he suddenly disappeared. The Sonnites say, that he was drowned in the Tigris (A.D. 879), and show what they say, probably with truth, is his tomb. The Schiites universally deny the fact of his death; they say, that he wanders unknown over the earth until the predestined moment shall arrive, when he shall claim and receive universal empire.

The belief in the eternal existence of the last Imám is common to several Schiite sects; the Nosairians stop at Ali, the first Imám, the Ismaelians at the seventh, the Druses give the title to Hamza, whose descent from Ali, however, is equivocal, but the great majority acknowledge twelve Imáms. They all say, that the earth will not have a legitimate sovereign until the re-appearance of the last Imám. The Persian kings of the Suffavean dynasty, or the Sophis, as they were anciently called in England, styled themselves "slaves of the lord of the country," that is, of the invisible Imám; they always kept two horses bridled and saddled in the royal stables at Ispahan, one for the twelfth Imám, whenever he should appear, the other for Jesus Christ, by whom they believed that he would be accompanied.

Impostors have frequently appeared, who called themselves the last Imám, or Imám Mahdi, that is, "the directed," or "the director;" the Fatimite Khaliphs of Egypt asserted that the soul of the last of the Imáms animated them in succession, and made this pretext the foundation of their authority. Some of the Oriental Christians have adopted this curious superstition; they say, that the last Imám became converted to the faith of the Gospel, and that he and the prophet Elijah are the two witnesses spoken of in the Book of Revelations. A very similar account may be found in Pastorini's prophecies, which are very extensively circulated among the Irish Catholics. Indeed, the identity of error and superstition in countries the most distant, and ages the most remote, is one of the most extraordinary facts that history reveals. We have already said, that the doctrine of the Imámate has been derived from Buddhism; we can show the geographical progress of the opinion; but, how are we to account

for the extraordinary similarity between Buddhism and Romanism? So strong is the resemblance, that the Jesuit missionaries at first said, that Buddhism was a corruption of Christianity, but finding that theory utterly inconsistent with history, they declared that it was invented by the devil as a parody on the true faith*.

* Some very curious particulars respecting this similarity may be found in NEUMANN'S *Translations from the Chinese and Armenian*, published by the Oriental Translation Committee.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SECT OF THE ISMAELIANS.—ORIGIN OF THE
ASSASSINS.

WE have already seen how greatly Mohammedanism was corrupted by its admixture with the religion of the ancient Persians; but there were certain sects among the Persians that professed doctrines more absurd and more pernicious than those of the Magians; which in fact taught principles destructive of morality and social order. From these sprung several impostors, who seduced crowds of followers, by appealing to the depraved passions of human nature; teaching the indifference of actions, community of women, and the equal distribution of property. The first of these was Hakem Ebn-Hashem, a native of Khorassan, who had been under-secretary to Abú Moslem, governor of that province. From the very first age of Islamism Khorassan had been the fruitful parent of heresies: there appeared the Ravendi, who taught the doctrines of the transmigration of souls and the successive incarnations of the Deity; and there flourished the Zendics, whose principle it was to believe nothing. Abú Moslem believed in the Ravendic heresy, his servant adopted the same creed, and resolved to turn it to profit. Hashem was very deformed, he knew that his figure would prevent his being believed if he proclaimed himself a Boddhisatwa, and he therefore covered himself with a silver veil, declaring that no mortal could gaze upon the effulgence of his face and live. Hence he is usually named Al Mokanna, "the veiled prophet." In

the reign of the Khaliph Al Mohdi* (A. D. 778,) Mokanna began to propagate his delusions, and by some juggling performances, persuaded the ignorant that he had the power of working miracles. In particular, he caused the appearance of the moon to rise out of a well for many nights in succession, whence he is called by the Persians Sázendeh Mah, "the moon-maker." The progress of this impostor was so rapid, that in a few months he was at the head of a numerous army, and had garrisoned several strong fortresses. A large force, however, being sent against him, he was compelled to seek refuge in one of his mountain-castles, where he was closely besieged. Hopeless of escape, he poisoned the entire garrison and his family, after which he plunged into a vessel containing some corrosive fluid, which consumed every part of him but the hair, hoping that from the disappearance of the body, it would be supposed that he had been taken up into heaven. One of his concubines, who hid herself when she saw these preparations, revealed the circumstance, but many of his former followers continued to believe in the divinity of Mokanna, and clothed themselves in white, to show their hostility to the Abasside Khaliphs, whose distinctive uniform was black. A still more formidable heretic and rebel appeared in Irák, during the Khaliphate of Al Mámún (A. D. 810); he was named Babec; for twenty years this daring impostor maintained his ground, during which time he is said to have murdered two hundred and fifty thousand Mohammedans in cold blood, to say nothing of those who perished in battle. This statement, however, is probably exaggerated, according to the usual custom of Oriental writers. He was at length defeated and forced to fly; an

* The father of the renowned Harún-al-Raschid.

Armenian prince betrayed him to the Khaliph Al Motassem, who ordered him to be executed. Babec was subjected to all the horrible tortures usual in the East; he was forced to see his family and children cruelly tormented in his presence, his limbs were cut off one by one, but he laughed in the face of his executioners and made a jest of his sufferings*.

* We learn from the *Suyar-ul-Mutahherin*, a valuable work on Mohammedan India, published by the Oriental Translation Committee, that Benda, a leader of the Sikhs in the last century, showed similar fortitude, or rather hardness of heart.

“As soon as they arrived at the outskirts of the city, the emperor sent out Mohammed Amin Khan with orders to bring them in, mounted as they were, but preceded by a number of heads upon pikes. Amongst the prisoners was Benda, with his face smeared with black, and a woollen cap upon his head. The wretch having been brought before the emperor, was ordered to the castle, where he was shut up with his son, and two or three of his chief commanders. The others were carried (a hundred every day) to the town-hall, where they were beheaded until the whole number of them was exhausted. What is singular, these people not only behaved patiently during the execution, but they contended for the honour of being first executed. At length Benda himself was produced, and *his son being placed on his lap, the father was ordered to cut his throat, which he did without uttering one word*. His flesh was then ordered to be torn off with red-hot pincers, and it was in those torments that he expired, expiating by his death, in some measure, the enormities he had himself committed on the people of God. Mohammed Amin Khan, struck with the appearance of Benda, could not help addressing him: ‘It is surprising,’ said he, ‘that one who shows so much acuteness in his countenance, and has displayed so much ability in his conduct, should have been guilty of such horrid enormities, that must infallibly ruin him in this world as well as in the next.’ With the greatest composure he replied: ‘I will tell you what, my lord, whenever men become so corrupt and wicked as to relinquish the path of equity, and to abandon themselves to all kind of excesses, then Providence never fails to raise up a scourge like me, to chastise a race become so depraved; but when the measure of punishment has been filled, then he raises up such a man as you to bring him to retributive justice.’”

An equally fierce enemy of the Mussulmans appeared in Irák during the reign of Al Motammed (A. D. 891). The founder of the new sect was a poor labourer named Karmath; he assumed the title of prince, chose twelve of his dupes as apostles, and obliged the rest to pay him an annual tribute. He inculcated the most ascetic doctrines, and taught that prayers should be said fifty times every day. The governor of the province, finding that many of the peasantry neglected their husbandry to say these prayers, threw the impostor into prison. He escaped from thence by the aid of a girl belonging to the gaoler, and then declared that he had been liberated by an angel. The sect spread rapidly; at length one of its professors forged a revelation, which he published; it contained the following words: "In the name of the most merciful God. Al Faraj Ebn Othmán, of the town of Nasrana, saith, that Christ appeared to him in a human form and said, Thou art the invitation; thou art the demonstration; thou art the camel; thou art the beast; thou art John the son of Zacharias; thou art the Holy Ghost." For several years the Karmatians maintained a fierce struggle against the Moslem armies; when victorious, they uniformly massacred their prisoners; when made captive, they presented themselves to the executioner with the constancy and courage of martyrs. A Karmatian chief having been made prisoner in a skirmish, was brought chained and fettered before the Khaliph, to whom he refused the customary homage. "Do you believe," asked the Khaliph, "that the Spirit of God dwells in your bodies?" The prisoner replied, "Suppose that the Spirit of God should reside in us, what hurt arises thence to you? or if an evil spirit resides within us, of what advantage is it to you? Mind your own business, and meddle not with the concerns of

other men.”—“What is your opinion,” continued the Khaliph, “of me and my dignity?” The Karmatian boldly answered, “Your ancestor Al Abbás was alive at the time of the prophet’s death, and yet did he either aspire to the Khaliphate, or was the dignity offered to him by any of the prophet’s companions? Was not Abú Bekr unanimously elected the successor of Mohammed? When he died, Omar was called to the succession, but no mention was made of Al Abbás in Abú Bekr’s will. A little before his death Omar nominated six persons to elect a new Khaliph, but he did not permit Al Abbás to be one of the number. What title, therefore, can you have to the Khaliphate, when your great ancestor, Al Abbás, himself was excluded from that high dignity by the companions of the prophet?” The indignant Khaliph ordered the executioners to cut off the insolent Karmatian’s hands and feet, and to complete his death by cruel tortures.

Abú Tháher, having been elected chief of the Karmatians, obtained many signal victories over the Khaliph’s armies. He stormed Mecca, slew thirty thousand defenders of the holy city, plundered and burned the Kaaba, and removed to Hajar, the celebrated black stone so highly venerated by the Mussulmans. Twenty-two years afterwards the stone was ransomed at an enormous price, by the emir of Irák, and restored to its ancient place. After a century of dreadful slaughter, the Karmatians were almost wholly extirpated.

The Karmatians are said to have been connected with the Ismaelians, and like them, to have believed in the seventh Imám. But the chief who organized the Ismaelians, warned by the calamitous destruction of Mokanna, Babec, and similar adventurers, resolved to spread his principles by means of a secret association, instead of venturing

into the open field. Similar attempts have been made in different ages of the world; the colleges of the Indian and Egyptian priests, the association of the Magi, which more than once shook the throne of Persia, the secret societies of the Pythagoreans in Southern Italy and Sicily, the Bacchanalians, of whom Livy gives us such a singular description, the Templars in the middle ages, and the Jesuits in our own, are all examples of secret societies formed under the pretext of religion, but really aiming at the establishment of their order in the plentitude of political power.

The founder of the Ismaelian association was Abdallah, a native of Ahwaz, in the Persian province of Khuzistan. His father and grandfather had been suspected of a treasonable attachment to the ancient religion and government of Persia; no proofs have been given of their guilt, but it is certain that the Persians, especially in the south and east, thoroughly detested their Arabian conquerors, and eagerly looked forward to the time when their national independence might be re-established. Abdallah saw the hazard of any open effort to overthrow at once the throne and the altar; he knew that men rarely resign all preconceived opinions at once, he therefore resolved to form lodges, similar to those of the modern Freemasons, in which the members should pass through seven gradations, each having its own peculiar system of doctrines. Missionaries, called Daïs, propagated the secret code which Abdallah taught, and it is said that the founder of the Karmatians was converted by one of them. This, however, we regard as doubtful, because the Karmatian system was not identical with the Ismaelian, though very similar to it; and also because Karmath preached obedience to the ideal Imám Massúm, and not to Imám Ismail.

About half a century after these events, during the reign of the Khaliph Al Mótaded, Saïd, a descendant, as some assert, of the Ismaelian Abdallah, rendered himself suspected of holding dangerous doctrines; he was thrown into prison, but having made his escape by the aid of an Ismaelian missionary, he erected the standard of rebellion in Northern Africa, and assumed the name of Obeid-allah. Proclaiming himself the legitimate descendant and heir of Ali and Fatima, he took the title Al Mohdi, "the director," which was usually given to the last Imám. The Mogrebians, or Western Arabs, warmly embraced the cause of this impostor, they declared that Mohammed had predicted that "three hundred years after the Hegira, the sun should rise in the west," and believing him to be thus predicted, they tendered him their allegiance. Obeid-allah made Kairwan, or Kuren (the ancient Cyrene), the capital of his dominions, but at the same time he laid the foundation of a new capital, which he designed to call Mohediah, from his assumed surname. Thus was founded (A.D. 910) the dynasty of the Fatimite Khaliphs, so named on account of their pretended descent from Fatima, the wife of Ali and daughter of Mohammed. Al Moezz, the third in succession from Obeid-allah, removed the seat of government to Egypt (A.D. 977), after which Mohediah, on which its founder had lavished enormous sums, fell rapidly into decay.

It must be confessed that no portion of Saracenic history is more keenly disputed than that which relates the origin of the Fatimite dynasty. The Abasside Khaliphs of Bagdad always denied their claim to be descended from Ali, and the authors of the Sonnite party declared, that Obeid-allah was the son of a renegade Jew, who followed the trade of a locksmith at Salamish, in Syria.

The Fatimite Khaliphs were Ismaelians; they gave

every possible encouragement to the extension of the Ismaelian association, and conferred office only on those who had been initiated into its mysteries. An Ismaeliah lodge was established at Kairwan, whence it removed with the court to Mohediah and Cairo. Its president, named the Dai-al-Doat, or chief missionary, was possessed of more power than ever belonged to the Grand Master of the Templars.

The Ismaelians of Egypt met in their grand lodge twice every week; their president, or Dai-al-Doat, paid a formal visit to the sovereign, and lectured him on some portion of the secret doctrines. Macrisi tells us that the degrees of the order were extended in Egypt from seven to nine, and furnishes us with the following account of the stages of initiation. In the first stage, the candidate was shown the doubts and difficulties attending the religion of the Korán, he was inspired with an anxious desire to have its mysteries explained, and some glimpses of the Ismaelian doctrine were then afforded, in order that he might be induced to take an oath of blind faith and unlimited obedience to his *Dai*, or instructor. In the second stage, the nature of the Imámate, as a divine institution, was explained. The peculiar doctrines of the Ismaelians commenced at the third degree, when the candidates were taught that the number of Imáms was seven, and that Ismail was the last and greatest. In the fourth stage it was declared, that since the creation there had been seven legislators divinely inspired, each of whom had modified the doctrines of his predecessors. These seven prophets were said to be "endowed with power of speech," because they authoritatively declared the divine will; they were each followed by "a mute prophet," that is, one whose duty was simply to enforce the doctrines of the preceding, without the power of altering or modifying them. The seven legislators were Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses,

Christ, Mohammed, and Ismail; their seven disciples, or "mute prophets," were Seth, Shem, Ishmael (the son of Abraham), Aaron, Simon (Peter), Ali, and Mohammed the son of Ismail.

In the fifth degree, it was declared that each of the "mute prophets" had appointed twelve Daïs, or apostles to spread the knowledge of the faith, and that the number twelve was next in sanctity to the number seven. Having passed through these inferior degrees, in which the great aim of all the tenets taught was to inspire converts with a high respect for their instructors, the secret doctrines were revealed to them in the next gradations. Those who attained the sixth degree, were told that religious legislation should be subordinate to philosophical; in the seventh stage, they were introduced to the mystical speculations; which characterize Oriental metaphysics; in the eighth, they were taught the indifference of human actions, and in the ninth, the initiated received their final lesson, "to believe nothing and dare everything."

Al Hákem, the subject of the virulent manifesto already quoted, was so great a patron of the Ismaelians, that a large portion of them believed him to have been a god, or rather an incarnation of the Divinity, and formed a new sect named Druses, which still continues to exist. He was assassinated by some of the orthodox Mussulmans, justly indignant at his impious pretences, which were the more revolting as his character was a disgusting compound of cruelty and weakness.

The Western, or Egyptian Ismaelians were beginning to decline, when a new branch of their sect appeared in Northern Persia, which was first called the association of Eastern Ismaelians, but became more celebrated under the title of The Assassins. The founder of this branch was

Hassan-ebn-Sabah, a native of Rey, or Rha (the ancient Rhagæ). His father Ali, was a distinguished Schiite, and he had learned many Asiatic corruptions in his native country, Khorassan. Finding himself regarded with suspicion by orthodox Mussulmans, he asserted that he was a native of Cufa, and a devoted adherent to the Sonnite creed; as a proof, he sent his son Hassan to be educated by the most celebrated orthodox doctor of the age. Two of Hassan's school-fellows became closely intimate with him, Nizám-al-Molk, and Omar Khiam. The three youths engaged to each other under the sanction of an oath, that if one of them attained to eminent station, he should share his greatness with his old associates. Nizám-al-Molk, at an early age, became the vizier of the celebrated Seljukian monarch Alp-Arslán, whose name, which signifies "the conquering lion," aptly describes his character. Nizám bestowed a pension on Khiam, whose only desire was to spend his life in luxurious idleness, but many years elapsed before Hassan appeared to claim the performance of the agreement. At length when Málek Shah had succeeded his father Alp-Arslán, Hassan appeared at the Seljukian court, and claimed from Nizám an introduction to the sovereign. The vizier readily consented, Hassan was taken into the service of Málek Shah, and began immediately to plot the destruction of his benefactor Nizám; he did not succeed, for the vizier discovered his artifices, and procured his banishment. Filled with rage, Hassan retired to Ispahan, where he was hospitably received by the Rais, or magistrate, Abu'l-Fasl. He one day told his host, that if he had two or three friends on whom he could depend, he would engage to overturn the power of the Seljukian and his peasant minister. The good-natured Rais believed that his guest must be insane, to speak of overturning an empire

that extended from Aleppo to Cashgar; he summoned physicians to attend him, and took care to keep him from stimulating food. Hassan was equally amused and annoyed by the friendly precautions; to get rid of them, he departed for Egypt (A.D. 1078), where he was gladly welcomed by Al Mostanzer, the Fatimite Khaliph.

It is one of the greatest evils of secret societies that they afford the most favourable opportunities that a conspirator can desire; even though such associations may be originally innocent, the members are at the mercy of any designing individual who may form a new order for purposes far different from those for which the society was founded*. The Ismaelian sect afforded Hassan every facility that he could desire, and he readily availed himself of such favourable circumstances. Hassan's own account of his first connexion with the Ismaelians has been preserved by Mirkhond, and it is too curious a specimen of autobiography to be omitted. It clearly shows that, like Mohammed and many others, he began in enthusiasm, and ended in imposture. "From my earliest youth, even from the age of seven years, the great object of my labours was the acquisition of knowledge. Brought up like my ancestors, in the doctrine of the twelve Imáms, I became acquainted with an Ismaelian companion; named Emir Daráh, with whom I was soon united in the strictest bonds of friendship. I thought that

* A very curious corroboration of this may be found in the history of Freemasonry. The "Royal Arch degree," in that institution, was originally devised by some Scotch Jacobites, as a means of holding together the partisans of the Pretender. From the place where they resided, the new degree was called "The Royal Arras," and meetings of its members "Royal Arras Chapters;" when the cause of the Pretender became hopeless, the new degree merged in the general system, and by an easy corruption its name was changed to that of "The Royal Arch."

the Khaliph of Egypt was a man deeply imbued with the Ismaelian and philosophic doctrines. Emir often undertook a defence of these opinions, and we had frequent controversies on our respective articles of faith. Though I was yet unconverted, the criticisms on my creed made a deep impression on my mind. After Emir's departure, I fell into a severe illness, during the progress of which I severely reproached myself for my incredulity, and regretted that I had not seized the opportunity of embracing the Ismaelite faith. After my recovery, I met another Ismaelite, Abú-Naschm-Zarasch, who at my request explained to me his creed, and made me thoroughly master of its articles. Finally, I met a Dai (missionary), named Múmin, to whom the Scheikh Abd-al-Malek Ebn-Attasch, superior of the missions in Irák, had given permission to make converts. I prayed him to accept my oath of fidelity to the Fatimite Khaliphs; at first he refused, because I was his superior in dignity, but seeing that I was sincere and earnest, he yielded to my request. The Scheikh Abd-al-Malek, who came at this time to Rha, was so much delighted by my conversation, that he at once appointed me a missionary of the altar and throne, a Dai; he engaged me to go to Egypt, for the purpose of entering into the service of the Fatimite Khaliph Al Mostanser, who then reigned. When Abd-al-Malek left Rha, for Ispahan, I too quitted the city, and took the road to Egypt." His fame had preceded him; the Dâi-al-Doat, with other persons of distinction, went to meet him on the road, and the Khaliph ordered a palace in Cairo to be prepared for his reception.

After the death of Mostanser, Hassan embraced the cause of Nezar, and when he was conquered by Mostali, became a prisoner. He was confined in Damietta; soon after one of the towers fell, and this accident was generally

attributed to the miraculous powers of Hassan. Mostali dreaded the presence of an enemy who was supposed to work miracles; he sent him on board a vessel bound for Western Africa, with the design of having him detained in some distant fortress. In the course of the voyage a fierce storm arose; all the sailors were filled with terror, but Hassan preserved his equanimity. The captain, surprised at his calmness, inquired the reason; Hassan replied, that he relied on the Divine protection. Soon after, the tempest abated; this was regarded by the crew as a new miracle, and a favourable wind for Syria arising, they readily agreed to take Hassan thither instead of to Africa. For many years he propagated his doctrines secretly through the Persian provinces between the Caspian and the Euphrates; but at length, by a judicious mixture of boldness and cunning (A. D. 1090), he made himself master of an impregnable mountain-castle, called from its position Alamoot, that is, "the eagle's nest." This celebrated fortress occupies the crest of a mountain chain, north of Casbin or Kasveen, and is described by the Oriental geographers as one of the strongest positions that can be imagined; some assert that Hassan obtained it by the same artifice which gave Dido possession of Carthage, but this is only an instance of the universal naturalization of popular fictions. In India, the English are said to have obtained the ground on which Calcutta stands from the emperor of Delhi, by similarly bargaining for as much land as a hide would cover, and then cutting the leather into thongs, that compassed a very considerable space.

Scarcely had Hassan obtained possession of Alamoot, when he received a visit from his old host in Ispahan; he reminded him of his former suspicions, and demanded whether he still believed in his insanity. The garrison

assembled in Alamoot was the most extraordinary collection of devotees that had ever been congregated. There was not one in the band who was not ready to sacrifice his life at the command of his chief; the dagger was never laid aside for a moment; whoever threatened his power, or opposed his ambition, was sure to perish. A portion of the confraternity was named the Fedavis, or "the consecrated;" their duty was to execute the edicts of their leader; to murder, at all risks, any person against whom he had pronounced the fatal sentence. The Oriental writers, unable to account for such devotedness, declare that Hassan had prepared a garden full of the most delicious luxuries, into which young converts were introduced, after having drunk a stupefying draught; they were after some time again presented with a drugged potion, and brought back to their companions, persuaded that they had tasted the delights of paradise. Others aver, that they drank an intoxicating beverage, made from the juice of hemp, and called *Haschisch*, whence the Fedavis were called *Haschischi*, a name since corrupted into Assassins. We are inclined to regard the first account as a mere revival of Schedad's fabled gardens of Irem, already mentioned in the first chapter: and, notwithstanding the high authorities that adopt the second theory, we deem that the name of the Assassins may be more naturally derived from the name of their founder, than from their use of any intoxicating liquor.

The Assassins were neither a nation nor a dynasty; they were simply an order or confraternity, similar to that of the Knights Templars, or the modern Freemasons. Their Grand-Master took the simple title of Scheikh, usually accorded to the heads of all the Arab tribes; the name of the Scheikh-al-Jebal, or chief of the mountain, soon became formidable throughout Asia. In Europe, the word Scheikh

was translated "old man," a signification which the word will bear; and the name of "The old man of the mountain" was pronounced with an instinctive shudder even on the coasts of the Atlantic.

Hassan made some important changes in the doctrine and discipline of the Ismaelians; he reduced the number of degrees to seven, and made a more judicious gradation in the secret doctrines. Above all, he organized the system of assassination, which soon proved more dreadful than myriads of soldiers. He was himself the vicar of the invisible Imám, and, as such, partially an incarnation of a divine principle; his followers believed that eternal happiness or misery rested on his nod; for them there existed no crime but disobedience to his orders, and this crime they knew would be promptly punished in this life, and they believed would produce endless tortures in the next. One of the first victims was Nizám-al-Molk, whom Hassan suspected of having urged Malek Schah to attempt his destruction. Soon after, Malek Schah himself perished (A. D. 1092), and his death was universally attributed to poison administered by a Fedavi.

Alarm was spread throughout Asia: the Mohammedan priests and doctors pronounced anathemas against all who belonged to the secret sect; to have exercised the function of a Dai, was declared to be a crime, for which subsequent penance could not atone; it was proclaimed that no confidence could be reposed in their renunciations, for that perjury was one of the precepts of the Ismaelians. A fierce war arose between the order and all existing dynasties; wherever the followers of Hassan were caught they were slaughtered without mercy, while they defied the executioners, and seemed to revel in their tortures. On the other hand, the chief enemies of the confraternity fell beneath

the daggers of the Fedavis; in the same year (A. D. 1096), the governor of Bagdad and the uncle of the Seljukian Sultan were murdered in the face of day, and in the public streets. The partisans of Hassan also gained possession of several other mountain-fortresses, especially of Schahdúr, which had been erected by Malek-Schah, near Ispahan. It is said, that Malek-Schah, while hunting in company with the Byzantine ambassador, lost one of his dogs on the table of rock where the castle was subsequently erected. The ambassador observed that his master would have availed himself of a position which nature had made so strong, to erect a fortress; the Sultan took the hint, and erected a castle, which he named Schahdúr, or "the royal pearl." When it fell into the hands of the Assassins, it was observed that better luck could not be expected of a castle built at the suggestion of an infidel, and under the guidance of a dog.

The Assassins appeared in Syria nearly at the same time as the warriors of the first crusade; both took advantage of the dissensions by which the Mohammedan empire was distracted, both were fierce enemies of the Mussulmans, but both were too violent in their fanaticism to act in concert. Redwán, the Saheb of Aleppo, had encouraged the Ismaelians to form settlements, and they in return gave him the use of their daggers against his enemies. On his death (A.D. 1113), the Ismaelians were subjected to the most cruel persecutions; more than three hundred were slain by the populace on the instant; two hundred more were reserved for a worse fate,—they were thrown into prison, and brought out in divisions to afford by their torments a barbarous sport to the populace. The Assassins were not slow in making reprisals; three of them attacked the governor of Khorassan, whom they mistook

for the Atta-beg of Damascus, in the very presence of the Khaliph and his whole court; they fell together with their victim. Several provincial governors were the victims of similar daring; and so great was the alarm thus diffused, that many of them destroyed their castles, fearing to refuse if the Ismaelians should demand their possession. The Seljukian Sultan Sanjar sent an army against the fortresses of the Assassins; he received the emphatic hint of having a dagger planted in his pillow by one of Hassan's emissaries, whom it was impossible to discover. Finding that his life was not safe in the midst of his guards, the Sultan hastened to make peace with the formidable Hassan. The reign of the founder of the Assassins lasted thirty-five years; it was an unvaried scene of massacre and murder; the jealous old man did not spare even his own children, having assassinated his two sons for violating the Ismaelian laws. Even in his last moments he meditated new ambitious projects, and planned revolts and assassinations that were to overturn empires. In his last illness, he dictated the rules of the order and the catechism of its doctrines. Immoveable himself, for during his entire reign, he but once quitted his mountain-castle, he issued orders from this centre of his power, which extended the sway of the Ismaelians from the east of Khorassan to the west of Syria; and by a dash of his pen directed the daggers of his Fedavis. A terrible instrument of Providence, he was, like the plague or the sword, the commissioned scourge of feeble sovereigns and corrupted nations. Hassan died A.D. 1124.

CHAPTER IX.

THE HISTORY OF THE ASSASSINS.

(CONTINUED.)

KIAH-BUZURG-OMID was appointed by Hassan to succeed him in the grand-mastership; but a part of the temporal power was conferred on Abu-Ali. Like his predecessor, he rested his strength on the daggers of his emissaries, and spread the terror of his name over the East. The princes of the Seljukian dynasty combined for their destruction, and Sultan Mahmúd, the uncle and successor of Sanjar, took Alamoot by storm; but the Assassins soon recovered their strong-hold, and after Mahmúd's death, spread themselves over all the territory of Casbin. Abú-Hashem, a descendant of Ali, soon after appeared to claim the dignity of Imám in the province of Ghilan, and was followed by a crowd of converts. Buzúrg sent to warn him of his danger, but receiving in reply a letter full of reproaches, he sent one of his lieutenants into Ghilan, who defeated Abú-Hashem and made him prisoner. The unfortunate captive was burned alive. In Syria the Assassins suffered many reverses, and this was probably the cause of their entering into a treaty with Baldwin, king of Jerusalem; the Christian monarch was persuaded to enter into this strange alliance, by the Grand-Master of the Templars, an order of chivalry whose constitution, as already observed, was not very unlike that of the Assassins. But neither party gained by the union; a plot of the Ismaelians to betray Damascus was discovered, and all belonging to that sect in the city cruelly massacred; a Christian army had marched to receive the surrender, and was surprised on the road

and routed with great slaughter. Several of the strongest Ismaelian castles were about the same time taken by different Moslem princes.

Yet at this very period, when misfortunes in rapid succession fell upon their order, the Assassins were more formidable than they had ever been. The Oriental annalists at the end of every reign, give a list of those generals, statesmen, and doctors of the law, that were murdered by the Fedavis. Eight assassins attacked and slew the prince of Mosul; seven of them perished on the spot. The mother of the young man that escaped, having received false intelligence of his death, clothed herself in robes of triumph, rejoicing that he had been martyred in the cause; but having subsequently learned his escape, she tore her hair, and clad herself in mourning, grieving that he had not shared the glorious fate of his seven companions. Nor were the victims simply nobles and statesmen; the Khaliphs themselves were not safe upon their thrones. The tenth Fatimite Khaliph was murdered by the Fedavis, A.D. 1126, and eight years after, the Khaliph of Bagdad was assassinated on a public road. Not satisfied with the perpetration of such a crime, they barbarously cut off his nose and ears, and contemptuously left the body naked on the spot.

Buz rg was succeeded by his son Mohammed. The third Grand-Mastership began as the second had ended, with the assassination of a Khaliph. Al Rashed, having assembled an army to revenge the death of his father, was murdered in his tent by four Fedavis, while he slept during the heat of noon. When the news of his death was received at Alamoot, the confraternity celebrated their deliverance from the threatened danger with the most extravagant rejoicing. For seven days and nights, the

mountains round "the eagle's nest" re-echoed to the clash of cymbals and drums, which announced to the other fortresses the triumph of crime. It would be useless, were it even possible, to enumerate all the victims sacrificed to the ambition or vengeance of this sect; suffice it to say, that the list includes persons of every rank, and almost of every nation then known to the civilized world.

The Sheïkh-al-Jebal's emissaries were in every city, and almost in every household; no one, whose name was once on his fatal list, could escape: the sanctity of the temple, the privacy of home, afforded no protection; he was in as much danger surrounded by an army, as alone in a desert. Well educated in the languages most likely to be of service to them, taught from their earliest infancy that they owed heaven and their order a death, the young Assassins went into the world with the single object of executing their commission. Murders were committed, not only to be revenged on enemies, but to please friends—or even to procure a sum of money for the common treasury. Those who fell in their wicked attempts, were regarded as martyrs; their relatives received rich presents, or, if slaves, were set at liberty. Thus hoping to procure eternal felicity for themselves, and temporal advantages for all they loved, these enthusiasts, sworn to murder, went out into the world to assail their destined victims; and so far from dreading to encounter death, they almost wished not to escape it. They traversed Asia, and even Europe, in countless disguises; and it was impossible to discover whether the monk kneeling at the altar, or the guest sitting at the table, might not be a minister of vengeance.

On all occasions, the Grand-Master and his emissaries declared that they sought dominion not for themselves or their order, but for the invisible Imám, who would soon

appear to establish the reign of truth and freedom. Whatever were their secret doctrines, they publicly professed themselves faithful adherents to the truth of Islám. Of this we may cite as a proof, the reply made to the Sultan Sanjar, when he sent an ambassador to inquire what were the tenets of the Ismaelians. The answer agreed upon in full conclave was as follows :—" We believe in the unity of God, and recognise as true wisdom only that which accords with the words of God and the laws of his prophet. We observe them such as they are written in the Korán ; we believe all that the prophet has told us concerning the creation and final destiny of the world, eternal happiness and misery according to men's actions, the great day of judgment, and the general resurrection. These records must be received with implicit faith ; no man has a right to submit to the control of his own reason the revealed declarations of the Omnipotent, or to change a single word in them. Such are the fundamental rules of our sect, and if the Sultan agrees not with us, he may send us one of his theologians, with whom we are ready to discuss the merits of our respective creeds."

Kiah-Mohammed possessed not the talents that his eminent station and arduous position required. The Ismaelians soon discovered his incapacity, and began to turn their eyes on his son Hassan, a young man of great learning and still greater abilities. The character of this youth was very similar to that of Hassan-ebn-Sabah, the founder of the sect ; and he contrived to have it reported that he was an incarnation of the lost Imám. Mohammed discovered the danger by which he was menaced ; two hundred and fifty of his son's partisans were beheaded, and as many more proscribed. Hassan, with consummate and scarcely paralleled hypocrisy, pronounced a solemn malediction on

his friends, and published several tracts denouncing their opinions as heretical. By this act he lulled the suspicions of his father, while he secretly continued to gain over new adherents. He was able to do this the more easily, as the castles of the Assassins were both in number and position beyond the power of Mohammed's limited capacity to control. They studded the mountain chains that almost girdle Persia, beginning from the remote peaks of Khorassan, passing round by the south of the Caspian, and thence turning southwards to Irák and Khuzistan, thence they extended through the ranges of Taurus and Libanus, until they almost touched the waters of the Levant. A glance at the map will suffice to show that the occupiers of such lines of fortresses must have been virtually masters of Central Asia.

Kiah-Mohammed's reign was not of long endurance; he was succeeded by Hassan II.; to the great joy of the Ismaelians. Scarcely had he assumed the office of Grand-Master, when he ordained a public assembly of his subjects at Alamoot (A.D. 1163), to hear a new revelation with which he pretended to have been favoured. A vast crowd assembled, and Hassan, ascending the pulpit, read a letter, which he pretended to have received from the invisible Imám; it stated: "Hassan is our vicar, our missionary, our demonstration. All those who follow our doctrine should obey him in all matters, spiritual and temporal; they should regard his commands as coming from on high, his words as inspired; they should do nothing which he forbids, they should perform everything which he commands, just as if we had delivered the commands in our proper person." In virtue of this letter Hassan declared, that "the gates of grace and mercy were open to all those who would follow and obey him; that they alone were the

truly elect; and that they were therefore freed from the obligation of every law, until the day of the resurrection, that is to say, until the revelation of the lost Imám." From this account it appears that Hassan's doctrines did not differ essentially from those promulgated by the Anabaptists and other heretics towards the close of the sixteenth century. When he had concluded his address, he ordered a rich banquet to be prepared, as for some high festival, and the rest of the day was spent in revelry and debauchery. The anniversary of Hassan's declaration was observed as a festival by the Ismaelians while the sect lasted, under the name of "the day of revelation;" and they never pronounced his name without adding to it the solemn formula, "Blessed be his memory." Mirkhond confirms this account of Hassan having preached the doctrine, that his disciples were free from the obligation of the moral law, by citing the following inscription, which he assures us, on respectable authority, was found written on the portals of the library of Alamoot:—

WITH THE AID OF GOD,
THE RULER OF THE UNIVERSE
DESTROYED THE FETTERS OF THE LAW;
BLESSINGS BE UPON HIS NAME.

To give double strength to his claims, the partisans of Hassan asserted, that he was descended from the Khaliphs of Egypt, and he did not discourage a tale which compromised his mother's honour, because it served to strengthen his influence. He became the victim of his own pernicious doctrines, having been assassinated by his brother-in-law, after a brief reign of four years.

Though the dignity of Grand-Master had been originally elective, the Kiah family had contrived to make it

hereditary; Mohammed II. succeeded his father Hassan, and avenged his death with merciless cruelty. He not only ordered the assassin to be executed, but included all his family, male and female, in the same sentence. Like his father, the new Grand-Master laboured strenuously to propagate the Antinomian doctrines, and he was enabled to gloss over their pernicious tendency by the semblance of philosophy, because he had been diligently instructed by his father. The library of Alamoot contained a valuable collection of scientific and metaphysical treatises, with the rarer accompaniment of astronomical and mathematical instruments; Mohammed was a diligent student, and possessed no ordinary share of abilities. He wrote several treatises on philosophy and jurisprudence, which are valued highly even by those who were the enemies of his order. It appears from a singular anecdote, that he was not quite so sanguinary as his predecessors. Fakreddin, a celebrated teacher of the law at Rha, was falsely accused of a secret inclination towards the Ismaelian doctrines; to remove the unjust suspicion he publicly cursed them from the pulpit, and applied to them every injurious epithet of which he was master. The news of this proceeding reached Mohammed, and he instantly sent a Fedavi to Rha, with special instructions. Seven months elapsed before the Ismaelite emissary had an opportunity of meeting Fakreddin alone; at length he found a favourable moment, when the doctor's servant was absent, he rushed into his apartment, threw Fakreddin on the ground, and placed his poignard to his throat.—“What is your design?” asked the terrified doctor.—“To tear out your heart.”—“Why?”—“Because you cease not to vent reproaches on the Ismaelians.”—Fakreddin conjured the Assassin to spare his life, and swore by all he held most sacred that he would never again

utter a syllable against so formidable a sect. "If I release you," said the Fedavi, "you will fall into your ancient errors, and you will believe yourself released from the obligation of an oath, obtained under duress." Fakreddin abjured any such design. The Fedavi then permitted him to rise, and continued, "If I had been really ordered to put you to death, I would have executed it on the instant. Mohammed, the son of Hassan, salutes you, and prays you to visit him in his castle. You shall have unlimited power, and we shall faithfully obey you for the future as your servants. My master declares, that he despises the slanders of the mere vulgar, which rest no longer on his mind than nuts on a perfect globe. But you are a person whose reproaches are more to be dreaded, for your words are as lasting as if graven on the stone with an iron chisel." Fakreddin replied, that it was not in his power to visit Alamoot; but that he felt much obliged to the Grand-Master, and would for the future speak of him with respect. The Fedavi then presented the doctor with two rich dresses, and three hundred pieces of gold, which he declared should be repeated every year, and then departed. Fakreddin kept his promise; his auditors soon observed the different tone in which he spoke of the Ismaelians, and one of them inquired the reason;—"I do not wish," he replied, "to speak evil of men whose proofs are so pointed, and whose demonstrations are so sharp."

But while the Assassins were strengthening their power in Persia, their influence in Western Asia was destroyed by the victorious progress of the gallant Saladin*; he had overthrown the dynasty of the Fatimite Khaliphs in Egypt, and now menaced with destruction the Attabegs of Syria. As he proclaimed himself the patron of the orthodox Mo-

* More properly Salah-eddin.

hammedan faith, he was naturally regarded as the enemy of the Ismaelians, and a proper object for the daggers of the Assassins. Several attempts were made on his life; four Assassins assailed him in the midst of his camp before Aleppo, but were torn to pieces by the guards, before they could give him a mortal wound. At length the celebrated victory of Saladin over his enemies on the plains of Hama (A.D. 1175), established his power in Syria and Egypt, and still greater efforts were made for his destruction. Four times the Fedavis attacked this dreaded enemy, but on each occasion he escaped as it were by miracle, and the Assassins were destroyed. But these repeated dangers terrified even Saladin; he retreated from the Ismaelian territory, and broke up the siege of Maszyad, the metropolis of the Assassins in Syria. The Assassins seemed tacitly to adopt the truce, for they did not again renew their attacks.

Sinan*, the Grand-Prior of the order of the Assassins in Syria, appears at this time to have enjoyed as much power as the Grand-Master in Alamoot; he declared that he was the last of the prophets, and published a volume of his pretended revelations. It is added, but on authority not above suspicion, that he declared himself an incarnation of the Divinity, and pretended to live without food. He deluded his followers for a short time, but they discovered that he had been lamed during an earthquake that shook Syria (A.D. 1157), and were near tearing the impostor to pieces. Sinan only laughed at the discovery; he ordered a banquet to be prepared, invited his disciples to partake of it, and addressed them afterwards with so much eloquence, that they were more devotedly attached to him than ever. Soon after this, an ambassador from Sinan to Almeric, or as he is called by the French writers, Amaury, king of

* This name in full is Raschid-eddin-Abu-al-Hasher-Sinan.

Jerusalem, was basely murdered by a Templar, and the Grand-Master of the Knights Templars refused to deliver the ruffian up to justice. The death of Amaury put an end to the controversy, which this atrocious crime excited in Palestine; but it also put an end to the hopes that were entertained of prevailing on the Ismaelians to join the Crusaders in expelling the Mohammedans from Palestine. Thenceforward the Christian nobles were as much exposed to their daggers as the Islámite princes had formerly been.

The fate of one of these victims is so intimately connected with a most interesting period of English history, that though it compels us to make rather a long digression, we must not pass it over. The readers of the history of the Crusades are aware of the violent hatred that arose between the French and English factions in the third of these wars, and probably have learned that the blame of these unfortunate dissensions is to be attributed as much to the haughty violence of Richard Cœur de Lion, as to the envious craft of Philip Augustus. After Philip had returned to France, Conrad, marquis of Tyre and Montserrat, became the leader of the French faction; he opposed the counsels, thwarted the plans, and severely criticised the actions of the fiery Richard; but he was especially loud in his condemnation of the negligence by which the fort of Ascalon was lost. A short time after this event, Conrad was murdered in the market-place of Tyre, and the Continental historians charge Richard with the crime of having instigated the assassins. That he was murdered by Ismaelian Fedavis is admitted on all hands, but the connexion between Richard and the Assassins is a much more difficult question; and we cannot, after a careful examination of the evidence, conscientiously pronounce a verdict of acquittal. Indeed, the attempt at defence made by the

monarch himself, is almost conclusive evidence of his guilt; he produced, as is well known, letters to the King of France, which he declared to have been written by the "old man of the mountain;" but they have every possible mark of forgeries: the prince of the Assassins is made to use a title which he abhorred; to date by an era of which he was ignorant, and to swear by a faith in which he did not believe. Finally, the assassins that slew Conrad, were emissaries not from the Scheikh-al-Jebal, the Grand-Master at Alamoot, but from the Grand-Prior at Maszyad. But those who reject the letters, and still believe in the innocence of Richard, tell us that such conduct is inconsistent with his chivalrous character. Now, it is a difficult thing to define what a "chivalrous character" means; if Richard's is to be taken as a sample, then it includes every conceivable crime but cowardice. His conduct to his father, his brothers, and his allies, while he was yet but Count of Poitiers, would justify any suspicion, however dark or degrading, respecting his future career. There are four Arabic contemporary historians; they were all in Palestine at the time; and three of them unhesitatingly declare that Conrad, marquis of Tyre and Montserrat, was murdered by the procurement of King Richard: the fourth (Ibn-Alatir), says that suspicions were divided between Richard and Saladin; but he furnishes us with the very important fact, that Conrad had been secretly negotiating a peace with Saladin, and that he had personally insulted the haughty Norman monarch by attributing to him the mischance of the Christian armies at Ascalon. Emád-eddin, who was a personal friend of Saladin's, says, "We were afflicted by the event, for though the marquis was a chief of the unbelievers, he was the sworn foe of the King of England; and their quarrel was to us, at the time, a matter

of the highest importance." All the Continental chroniclers declare, that the Assassins, when led out to execution, named Richard as their employer; the Oriental historians testify the same thing; the king himself had no better defence than a palpable forgery: can we deny that the weight of evidence preponderates to the side of guilt?

When at a later period (A. D. 1158), an attempt was made on the life of Frederic Barbarossa, then besieging Milan, it was disputed whether the assassin came from Spain or Syria, had been bribed by the Pontiff of Rome or Bagdad, commissioned by the Old Man of the Mountain, or the Old Man of the Seven Hills, a believer in the Supremacy of Ismail or Saint Peter. It is certain that one or the other directed the dagger; we decide not the question, leaving it to our readers to determine which would gain most by that brave emperor's death,—we only allude to the controversy, as an instance of crimes being imputed to the Scheikh-al-Jebal of which he could not possibly have been guilty.

Two years after the death of Conrad, Henry, count of Champagne, when travelling through Palestine, was hospitably received at the castle of Maszyad by the Grand-Prior who succeeded Sinan. After he had seen a number of towers and battlements, which fenced every approach to the castle, he was brought to a precipice on which a tower more lofty than any he had seen was erected; on each battlement of it stood two sentinels, clothed in the white robes that distinguished those initiated into the order. "Doubtless," said the Grand-Prior to the count, "you do not possess servants as obedient as mine." He then made a signal, upon which two of the sentinels threw themselves over the precipice, and were dashed to pieces. He added, "If you desire it, all whom you thus

see clothed in white, shall precipitate themselves in a similar manner." Henry expressed no desire to witness the result of such an experiment; he thanked the Grand-Prior, and declared that never had any sovereign such devoted subjects. Before the count quitted Maszyad, his host, after having warmly thanked him for the pleasure his company had afforded, added, "If you have any enemy who gives you annoyance, let me know his name, and he shall instantly be removed from your path; it is by the aid of servants faithful and devoted as those you have seen, that I rid the order of its enemies." A similar anecdote is related of Hassan-ebn-Sabah, the founder of the order, when he entertained an ambassador from Malek-Schah; both are probably tales founded on the extraordinary devotedness which the Fedavis, on many and well-authenticated occasions, unquestionably exhibited.

Mohammed was poisoned by his son and successor Hassan III., who had openly resisted the antinomian doctrines of his father, and declared his design of restoring the pure faith of Islám. No sooner had he entered on the office of Grand-Master (A. D. 1178), than he prepared to execute his intentions; teachers of the law were summoned to teach the principles of the Mohammedan faith in the castles and halls of the Assassins; the ceremonies of public prayer were re-established, and schools were erected for the purpose of affording instruction in the doctrines of the Korán. Not only did he address letters announcing his conversion to the several Grand-Priors and lieutenants of the Ismaelians, but he sent ambassadors to the different princes of the neighbouring nations, declaring his resolution to have the orthodox faith established throughout his dominions. No doubts seem to have been entertained of his sincerity; his ambassadors were every

where received courteously, and in most places with unusual marks of distinction. The inhabitants of Casbin, having suffered so often and so severely from the plundering expeditions of their neighbours in Alamoot, were slow to believe the fact of the Grand-Master's conversion; but Hassan invited them to send some persons of distinction to his fortress; with them he conversed freely on the articles of faith, and in their presence he committed to the flames the impious books written by his name-sake Hassan, the founder of the order.

In the second year of his reign, he sent his mother and spouse on the pilgrimage to Mecca, with a magnificent train of attendants. The princes of the countries through which they passed made every exertion to honour the harem of the New Mússulman, as Hassan III. was now generally designated, and the Khaliph gave his standard precedence to that of the powerful monarch of Kharasm. But the Shah of Kharasm was by no means inclined to submit to such a degradation; he levied a numerous army, and invaded the territories of the Khaliph; he was, however, forced to retire by a heavy fall of snow. His son renewed the war, but the appearance of the Mongols*, on his western frontier, and the rapid progress of Jenghiz Khan, compelled him to spare the tottering throne of the house of Abbas. Hassan III. further departed from the policy of his predecessors, by leaving his castle to join in an expedition against the governor of Irák. During his absence of eighteen months from Alamoot, he continually and even ostentatiously manifested the horror with which

* This word is commonly written Moguls; but as M. Schmidt, Professor of the Mongolian language at St. Petersburg, invariably writes the word Mongols, we have deemed it right to defer to his authority.

he viewed the heresies of the Ismaelians, and as his adroit conduct was in perfect harmony with his words, the Musulman princes of every country through which he passed, came to meet him, and treated him with the utmost respect and hospitable kindness. But these changes were not equally popular with the Ismaelians, and after a reign of twelve years, Hassan III. fell a victim to poison. He was succeeded by his son, Allah-eddin Mohammed III., a boy only nine years of age.

Mohammed III., or rather those who ruled in his name, put to a cruel death all whom they suspected of having had a share in the murder of Hassan III.; but they also abolished his late reforms, and restored the ancient religion and constitution of the order as established by Hassan-ebn-Sabah. In the early part of his reign, the young prince was bled by an ignorant physician, who took from him too much blood, and his mind and body were ever after enfeebled. From that time he abandoned all care of state affairs, and put to the torture all who dared to speak to him respecting the administration. Every thing in which he ought to be interested, was hidden from his knowledge; his miserable life was spent without friends or counsellors, for no one dared to approach the imbecile tyrant. The consequent evils daily went on augmenting, and it is scarcely an exaggeration to say, that at this period, the confraternity of the Assassins had neither army, finances, nor administration. The attempted reforms of Hassan III. had in no small degree contributed to the decadence of the order; his subjects ceased to be enthusiastic Ismaelians, without becoming orthodox Mohammedans; but by the efforts of the Grand-Master to effect a revolution, the sect stood self-convicted of impious and anti-social principles.

During Allah-eddin's reign, a very singular negotiation

was concluded with the last of the Sultans of Kharasm, the particulars of which we obtain from the narrative of an eye-witness. The Sultan gave the government of Nishaboor and the surrounding districts to the Emir Orkhan; whilst Orkhan was engaged in a distant expedition, his lieutenant invaded and ravaged the territories of the Assassins, and when an embassy was sent to demand satisfaction, instead of replying, he threw several daggers down before the feet of the ambassador*. By this action, he symbolically declared either his contempt for the daggers of the Assassins, or his determination to attack them with their own weapons. The Grand-Master immediately sent his Fedavis against Orkhan; the emir was murdered by three of them at the gates of the city of Kendsha, who, so far from attempting to fly, entered the city, holding aloft their bloody daggers, and loudly proclaiming the power and dignity of their Grand-Master Allah-eddin. They then declared their intention to take vengeance on the vizier, and entered his palace in search of him; but the popular indignation was at length excited, and the three Assassins were stoned to death by the multitude.

Bedreddin-Ahmed, an ambassador from the Grand-Master to the vizier, was on his road, when he heard of these events at Kendsha; before proceeding any further, he wrote to the vizier to inquire whether he would be permitted to continue

* These allegorical messages have been common in the East from the earliest ages. The Scythians sent Darius a mole, a bird, a fish, and an arrow; intimating that if he could not mine through the earth, fly through the air, or swim over the sea, his army must fall victims to the Scythian arrows. When the ambassadors of Porus came before Alexander, they threw a handful of corn on the ground, to intimate the vast number of the Indian forces. Alexander in reply, ordered a fowl to be introduced, who soon devoured the corn, thus declaring his contempt for the superior numbers of the enemy.

his journey? The vizier, who had been completely terrified by the murder of Orkhan, sent him a safe conduct, and on his arrival exerted himself to satisfy all his demands. These were a cessation of hostilities, and the sale of the fortress Damagham to the prince of the Assassins. Bedreddin continued for some time a guest with the vizier. One day, when a rich banquet had rendered him peculiarly communicative, he informed the vizier that there were several Ismaelians among his guards, his attendants, and his pages. The vizier anxiously requested that they should be pointed out to him, and gave his handkerchief as a pledge that no evil should happen them. Five of his domestics immediately stepped forward and declared that they belonged to the formidable sect. One of them, an Indian by birth, added, "On such a day, and at such an hour, I could have assassinated you with impunity; the only reason of your escape was that I had not received orders for your destruction from my superiors." The vizier, naturally timorous, and justly terrified by such a proof of the dangers that surrounded him, threw himself at the feet of the Assassins, conjuring them to spare his life, and swearing that for the future he would be the faithful slave of the Grand-Master. Bedreddin consoled him, and soon after departed.

When the Sultan received intelligence of these circumstances, he was greatly enraged at the cowardice of his vizier, and sent him a letter full of reproaches, with a peremptory command to burn the five Ismaelians alive. The vizier was forced to comply; in the midst of the flames, the Assassins testified the most extravagant joy for being honoured with martyrdom, and died celebrating the praises of Allah-eddin. The Grand-Master knew that the vizier was, on this occasion, an involuntary agent; he privately sent

him an ambassador, who declared, " You have thrown five of my faithful followers into the flames; if you wish to redeem your own life, you must pay for each of them ten thousand pieces of gold." The vizier received the envoy with the highest honours; he agreed not only to give the sum demanded, but to pay in addition the purchase-money of Damaghan.

Allah-eddin was murdered by one of his confidential domestics (A.D. 1254), bribed to commit the crime, by his son Rokne'ddin; but no sooner had Rokne'ddin obtained the fruits of his guilt, than he ordered the assassin to be executed.

Rokne'ddin was the last prince of the Assassins. Under the guidance of Mangú-Khán*, the third in succession from the celebrated Jenghiz, the Mongolian hosts spread themselves over Central and Western Asia. The feeble Khaliph of Bagdad, and the citizens of Casbin, sent at the same time ambassadors to the Mongolian emperor, complaining of the evils with which the Assassins had for one hundred and fifty years afflicted Asia, and entreating his protection; the chief judge of Casbin, who was among the deputation, exhibited a cuirass which he wore under his robes, as he

* William de Rubruquis, who visited Tartary in 1253, gives us a very curious account of Mangú Khán. When he arrived at his court, and was admitted to an audience, he found the Khán reclining at his ease before some ladies. The house was hung with cloth of gold. In the midst was a fire, made of thorns, wormwood-roots of a large size, and ox-dung. The Khán sat on a bed, and was clad with a robe of spotted fur, which shone like seal-skin. He was of a middle stature, flat-nosed, and appeared to be about forty-five years of age (he was really forty-eight at this period). His wife, who was a pretty little woman, sat by him: and in another bed at a little distance, sat his daughter Khirina, not particularly handsome: with her were several little children.

asserted, from constant dread of being attacked by the Ismaelians. Mangú immediately promised compliance; and assembling a large army, intrusted it to his brother, the celebrated Húlakú Khán, to whom he gave the following directions: "I send you with a powerful army, and a gallant body of cavaliers, the best between Turán and Irán, the land of mighty princes. Be careful to observe the laws and regulations established by our illustrious predecessor Jenghiz Khan, and extend the sway of the Mongols from the Gihon (Oxus) even to the Nile. I wish you to recompense and favour the nations who will submit to you voluntarily, and promise obedience; but those who shall resist or revolt against you, must be exterminated, together with their wives and children. After having annihilated the order of the Assassins, you shall undertake the conquest of Irák. If the Khaliph of Bagdad offers you his service, and proffers homage, you shall treat him with kindness and indulgence. But if he opposes the progress of your arms, let him share the fate of others." Húlakú promised implicit obedience to these orders, and made diligent preparations for their execution. He arranged his forces in several divisions, examined carefully the character of the officers intrusted with the command of each, and engaged in his service a thousand Chinese families of artificers, skilled in the preparation of that extraordinary composition, known in Europe under the name of Greek Fire*, but which, like gunpowder, seems to have been known to the Eastern nations from very remote ages. He departed on this expedition in the 651st year of the Hegira, and appointed Samarcand to be the first place of rendezvous for his numerous forces.

* The following account of this extraordinary composition is given by a celebrated historian. "From the obscure, and perhaps fallaci-

Whilst Húlakú remained at Samarcand, the emirs and princes of Samarcand sent several embassies, offering aid and soliciting his friendship. At the same time he sent circular letters to the different princes through whose territories he meant to pass, couched in the following terms :—

ous, hints of the Byzantine writers, it would seem that the principal ingredient of the Greek fire was the *naphtha*, or liquid bitumen, a light, tenacious and inflammable oil, which springs from the earth, and catches fire as soon as it comes in contact with the air. The *naphtha* was mingled, I know not by what methods, or in what proportions, with sulphur and with the pitch that is extracted from evergreen firs. From this mixture, which produced a thick smoke and a loud explosion, proceeded a fierce and obstinate flame, which not only rose in perpendicular ascent, but likewise burned with equal vehemence in descent or lateral progress; instead of being extinguished, it was nourished and quickened by the element of water; and sand or vinegar were the only remedies that could damp the fury of this powerful agent, which was justly denominated by the Greeks, the *liquid*, or the *maritime* fire. For the annoyance of the enemy, it was employed with equal effect, by sea and land, in battles or in sieges. It was either poured from the ramparts in large boilers, or launched in red-hot balls of stone and iron, or darted in arrows and javelins, twisted round with flax and tow, which had deeply imbibed the inflammable oil; sometimes it was deposited in fire-ships, the victims and instruments of a more ample vengeance, and was most commonly blown through long tubes of copper, which were planted on the prow of a galley, and fancifully shaped into the mouths of savage monsters, that seemed to vomit a stream of liquid and consuming fire. ‘It came flying through the air,’ says Joinville (the historian of the crusade of St. Louis, in which ill-fated expedition he had a personal share), ‘like a winged, long-tailed dragon about the thickness of a hogshead, with the report of thunder and velocity of lightning; and the darkness of the night was dispelled by this deadly illumination.’ Some very learned authors are of opinion, that allusion is made to this composition in the legend which describes Bacchus and Hercules to have been repulsed from the rock Aörnös by the flaming missiles of their enemies. Notwithstanding all its terrors, the Greek Fire seems not to have been so efficacious as gunpowder, and when that came into general use, it was soon laid aside.”—*Gibbon*, vol. x., p. 15.

“I come in the name of the Khan to destroy the order of the Assassins and their strong castles ; if you support me in this enterprise, your efforts shall be rewarded, and your provinces protected ; but if, on the contrary, I perceive in you any hostile sentiments, after the extirpation of that order, I shall turn my arms against you. Remember my words, for what I have predicted will most assuredly come to pass.” The progress of Húlakú was not, like that of his great predecessor, Jenghiz Khán, marked solely by devastations ; he caused several cities, formerly destroyed by the Mongols in the eastern provinces of Persia to be restored.

Rokne'ddin was at this period nominally the Grand-Master of the Assassins, but his vizier Nazir-eddin really possessed the chief authority. The minister was a native of Tús, in Khorassan, and had obtained a great and merited reputation by his skill in astronomy and the mathematical sciences. He dedicated one of his works to the Khaliph Mostazem, who seemed willing to become his patron. Ebn-al-Kami, the vizier, jealous of Nazir-eddin, pointed out to the Khaliph that the phrase “representative of God upon earth” was omitted in the dedication, whereupon Mostazem declared that the author must be a blockhead, and immediately flung his book into the Tigris. From that moment the wounded vanity of the author could only be satisfied with exemplary vengeance. He fled to Alamoot, and implored the protection of the Grand-Master of the Assassins, under whose poignards so many viziers and Khaliphs had perished ; but finding that Rokne'ddin did not embrace his cause very warmly, and deeming that Húlakú would be a more powerful patron, he resolved to gain his favour by betraying into his hands, the castles of the Assassins, and their Grand-Master. Rokne'ddin was

persuaded by his treacherous vizier to offer submission: Húlakú demanded as a condition the instant surrender of all his castles. The Ismaelian officers, more gallant than their chieftain, refused to consent, and Rokne'ddin was forced to seek refuge from the vengeance of his subjects in the Mongolian camp. From this moment the strength of the Assassins was broken, castle after castle yielded to the irresistible Húlakú; Alamoot itself was taken, and enriched its conquerors with the immense spoil that had been accumulating from the days of Hassan-ebn-Sabah; Rokne'ddin, after having been subjected to many degradations, was murdered by the Mongols, and his body flung into the Oxus.

The Grand-Prior of the Ismaelians in Syria refused to imitate the example of Rokne'ddin, but Húlakú did not immediately proceed to take vengeance, having now resolved to turn his forces against Bagdad, and overthrow the throne of the Khaliphs, which had now lasted for more than seven centuries. To this enterprize he was chiefly urged by the traitor Nazir-eddin, who was still anxious to revenge the insult offered to his literary character. He was aided by Ebn-al-Kami, the treacherous vizier of Mostazem, who was secretly inclined to the Schiite doctrines, and consequently enraged at the severity with which the Khaliph treated the partisans of the house of Ali. When Húlakú received the secret message of Ebn-al-Kami he desired Nazir-eddin to consult the stars, and the answer being [propitious, he resolved on advancing. Mostazem was so ignorant of the impending danger, that he dismissed a large portion of his troops, and felt persuaded that the Mongols would not dare to persevere in their hostilities. Nor was this delusion confined to the Khaliph. An emir having been taken prisoner, wrote to his friends, that, "as

they were unable to resist the mighty hosts of the Mongolian general, they ought to propitiate his favour by a speedy surrender;" he received in reply a reproachful letter, in which were the following proud expressions:—"Who is Húlakú, and what his power, that he should presume to make war upon the house of Abbas? Their empire is derived from God above, and therefore no prince can meet with success who endeavours to overturn it. If Húlakú had been a friend to peace, he would never have entered and ravaged the Khaliph's territories. Nevertheless, if he should now be sincerely desirous of it, let him return to Hamadán, and we will intercede with the Dowaidar (second minister of state) to prevail upon the Commander of the Faithful to forgive the enormous crime that he has committed." The emir showed this extraordinary letter to Húlakú, who could not forbear from laughing at its idle rhodomontade, and especially at the pompous offer with which it closed.

The Mongolian armies advanced without meeting any opposition, almost to the very gates of Bagdad; it was not until their hosts could be seen spreading themselves beneath the walls, that the Khaliph gave orders for closing the gates and manning the ramparts. Whilst upon his march, the Mongolian general received an embassy from the three chiefs of the descendants of Ali, who were settled at Hilláh, not far from the ruins of Babylon. They sent him a tender of their submission, and a long catalogue of all the persecutions to which the family of Ali had been subjected by the Abasside Khaliphs. They added, that according to a prophecy delivered by their great progenitor Ali, "the lion of God, the sage of the faith, the son-in-law of the prophet, the son of Abú Táleb, the true and legitimate Imám," the time for the conquest and fall of Bagdad

had arrived. Húlakú, delighted to receive the submission of those whom a portion of the Mussulmans still regarded as superior in dignity to the Khaliphs, and either believing the prophecy, or supposing that the circulation of it would be favourable to his interests, replied in the most respectful and even affectionate terms. He also ordered Allah-eddin, who commanded his forces in that quarter, to grant protection to the city and inhabitants of Hilláh.

The siege of Bagdad was soon formed, and the city quickly reduced to great straits; in vain did Mostazem send repeated embassies, soliciting peace on any conditions that could be obtained; relying upon the promises of the treacherous Ebn-al-Kami, and urged forward by the virulent Nazir-eddin, Húlakú peremptorily demanded that Mostazem should surrender at discretion. With these severe conditions, the Khaliph was forced to comply: Bagdad was given up to be pillaged (A.D. 1258), the wealth which had been accumulated in the proud city during the palmy days of the Saracenic empire became the prey of ruthless barbarians; fire and sword, and savage passions, raged through its devoted streets for several days, until little remained but heaps of ruins, to show where the metropolis of the East had once stood. Mostazem was not long permitted to survive his fall; superstition hindered the conqueror from shedding the blood of a sovereign, but he ordered him to be enclosed in a leathern sack, and then beaten to death with clubs.

In the mean time, the Assassins of Syria had been completely humbled by Bebars, the great Sultan of Egypt, and an Egyptian garrison admitted into their second metropolis, Maszyad. But though in this, the crisis of their fate, the Assassins were deserted and betrayed by their chief dignitaries, yet many of the inferior officers supported

their order with a desperate fidelity worthy of a better cause. Amongst these was Hamza, the favourite hero of Syrian romance, whom we should be careful not to confound with a gallant soldier of the same name, or the Hamza that founded the sect of the Druses. An entire class of chivalrous compositions are named from the former, Hamza-Námeh, and they are still favourite recitations in the East. But individual heroism could not save the falling order; their castles were taken, and either destroyed or garrisoned by their enemies. In Persia, the entire sect became nearly extinct, but Ismaelian principles long continued to be propagated in Syria; where, indeed, traces of them may still be found. The present Ismaelians, like their predecessors, show a strong preference for mountainous districts; they are found chiefly on the borders of Irák, and along the chain of Anti-Libanus. But they retain neither the revolutionary politics, the mysterious doctrines, nor the murderous system of their founders; their sacred writings are an incongruous mixture of Islamite and Christian traditions, united to the follies of mystic theology*.

Connected with this sect are the Nasairians, the miserable remnant of the once formidable Karmathites, and the Motawelians, who declare that the allegorical interpretation of the Korán is the rule of faith. Several minor sects, chiefly derived from the Karmathites and Ismaelians, are thinly scattered through Mohammedan countries, all believing in some invisible Imám, whose speedy appearance they profess to expect. The orthodox Mussulmans accuse

* It is probable that the dispute which agitated the Greek church in the reign of the Emperor Cantacuzenus respecting the eternity of the light on Mount Tabor, arose from the introduction of Oriental mysticism into the Byzantine dominions.

them of secret indulgence in gross immoralities, and call them Zendics, a name nearly corresponding with our Sceptics, or Free-thinkers. But it would be as unfair to judge of these sectaries by the writings of their enemies, as to take our account of the early Christians from the libels of their Pagan persecutors. The following description of the modern Ismaelians is given by Mr. Rousseau, who long resided in the Levant.

“ The Ismaelians of Syria are divided into two classes, the Sweidanis and the Khedrewis, who differ from each other only in certain external ceremonies. Both recognise the divinity of Ali (son of Abú-Táleb), and declare that light is the universal principle of all things created. These sectaries call it ‘the light of the eye*,’ an equivocal expression, the source of many superstitions; but the greater part of their Scheikhs declare that it is a virtue, a charm or supernatural force, which produces and preserves the different parts of the universe. As a consequence of their dissimulation in regard to religion, they have no public temple; they, however, go on pilgrimage to the tomb of Ali, which is erected in the desert, four or five days’ journey from the ruins of Bagdad. They have also another place of devotion near Mecca, whither they make a secret pilgrimage whenever an opportunity offers; but I have not been able to discover the name of the saint or prophet to whom they have dedicated this shrine. The Khe-

* The last canto of *Kehama* contains a powerful description of the effect of Seeva’s eye, derived from the ancient Hindú mythology, which we regard as the source of most Oriental corruption. “ In Seeva’s presence,” says a Sanscrit poem, “ the sun shines not, nor the moon and stars; these lightnings flash not in that place; how should even fire blaze there? God irradiates all this bright substance, and by its effulgence the universe is enlightened.”—*From the Yajurveda. Asiat. Res.*

drewis, who form the most numerous class, are governed by an emir; their chief place of residence is Maszyad, the ancient fortress of the Assassins, which lies about twelve leagues west of Hamah. On an isolated rock at the foot of this place, a little eastwards, is a large town of the same name, surrounded with walls, which contains about two hundred houses. In it are found several baths, caravan-serais, shops, and one or two mosques.

“The Ismaelians possess also another fortress, named Kalamús, fully as strong as Maszyad, from which it is distant about three leagues westwards.

“The second class or tribe of the Ismaelians, composed of the Sweidanis, is far less numerous than the preceding. It is concentrated in the village of Feudara, one of the eighteen contained in the jurisdiction of Maszyad. It is poor, and exposed to the insults of the Khedrewis.

“The Nasairians, whom the Mussulmans call *Ghelât* (extravagant, fanatic), differ entirely in their religious opinions from the orthodox Mohammedans; and profess opinions similar to those of the Ismaelians. They admit, like them, the divinity of Ali, and the metempsychosis (that is, the successive incarnations of a divine soul in the Imáms). The Nasairians have also their sacrifices of propitiation, but prayer is scarcely ever used among them. They are infinitely superior in number, in force, and in wealth, to their neighbours the Ismaelians, whom they incessantly harass by predatory incursions. This nation is composed of several tribes, strictly united by the ties of blood and religion. Their confederation is governed by a single chief; they inhabit that part of the mountains of Semmak which is called Safita, from the name of their principal town, which is situated at the distance of about seven or eight leagues from Tripoli.”

In his communication to the *Annales des Voyages*, the same writer, having given a summary of the Ismaelian doctrines, thus continues: "Such were in substance the doctrines of the first Ismaelians, and nearly the same are those which their descendants established in Syria profess at the present day. I say nearly, for, beyond a doubt, fallen as the latter are from their ancient social organization, they are not less so from their primitive belief. This belief, disfigured now more than ever, is become excessively extravagant, from the multitude of corruptions and idle superstitions that have been introduced into it in the course of time. A certain Scheikh Raschideddin (the celebrated Grand-Prior of the Assassins mentioned in page 227), who appeared among them, I believe, about three hundred years ago, completed the corruption of their faith, by making them believe that he was the last of the prophets in whom divine intelligence would be manifested. This impostor was well versed in the Sacred Writings; he appears to be the author of a book, some fragments of which I have translated, in which he lays down his principles as authoritatively as if he were himself all-powerful."

CHAPTER X.

THE DRUSES.

ABOUT the beginning of the seventeenth century, the sympathies of Christendom were awakened by the intelligence that a bold and gallant race, in the mountains of Syria, was maintaining a desperate struggle against the overwhelming forces of the Ottoman empire: it was known that they did not belong to the followers of Mohammed, whence it was rather hastily concluded that they must be Christians. The name of the sturdy mountaineers, the Druses, for a time afforded ample scope to conjecture; at length an ingenious etymologist suggested that they might probably have descended from the followers of the *Count de Dreux*, who was supposed to have settled in Palestine during the first crusade. Faker-el-din, more commonly called Fakraddin, the able leader of the Druses, hoping to gain assistance from Europe, sedulously exerted himself to propagate this delusion; he visited Italy, and represented himself as allied by descent to the powerful house of Lorraine. The Norman origin of the Druses was instantly received throughout Europe as an established fact; it is even introduced into the powerful description of this interesting people, given in the late Bishop Heber's poem of *Palestine*. With the exception of this error, however, the picture of this free and hardy race is so accurate, that it deserves to be quoted.

Fierce, hardy, proud, in conscious freedom bold,
 Those stormy seats* the warrior Druses hold;
 From Norman blood their lofty line they trace,
 Their lion-courage proves their generous race.

* The mountains of Lebanon.

They, only they, while all around them kneel
In sullen homage to the Thracian steel,
Teach their pale despot's waning moon to fear
The patriot terrors of the mountain-spear.

Yes, valorous chiefs, while yet your sabres shine,
The native guard of feeble Palestine,
Oh, ever thus, by no vain boast dismayed,
Defend the birth-right of the cedar-shade !
What though no more for you the obedient gale
Swells the white bosom of the Tyrian sail ;
Though now no more your glittering marts unfold
Sidonian dyes, and Lusitanian gold !
Though not for you the pale and sickly slave
Forgets the light in Ophir's wealthy cave ;
Yet yours the lot, in proud contentment blest,
Where cheerful labour leads to tranquil rest.
No robber-rage the ripening harvest knows ;
And unrestrained the generous vintage flows :
Nor less your sons to manliest deeds aspire,
And Asia's mountains glow with Spartan fire.

So when, deep sinking in the rosy main,
The western sun forsakes the Syrian plain,
His watery rays reflected lustre shed,
And pour their latest light on Carmel's head.

Yet shines your praise, amid surrounding gloom,
As the lone lamp that trembles in the tomb :
For few the souls that spurn a tyrant's chain,
And small the bounds of freedom's scanty reign.

More accurate observations on the manners and customs of the Druses soon proved that the theory of their Norman origin was a mere fable, and the publication of some of their religious books, by Bishop Adler, showed them to be a remnant of the widely-diffused Ismaelians.

In the beginning of the eleventh century, Al Hakem Be-âm-r-illah, the most stupid and tyrannical of the Fatimite Khaliphs, was alarmed by an insurrection of the orthodox Mussulmans of Egypt. Its leader was an obscure water-

carrier of Cairo, who pretended that he was descended from the Ommiade family. After a long and severe contest the impostor was conquered, and made prisoner. The Khaliph devised a new and singular mode of putting him to death; he had him bound hand and foot to a camel, and led through the streets of Cairo, while an ape, trained for the purpose, beat his head with a stone until life was extinct. From thenceforward the Egyptian Khaliph became a bitter persecutor of the orthodox, and a vigorous opponent of the Khaliphs of Bagdad; we have already quoted the injurious manifesto issued by the latter assailing the pretensions of the Fatimites.

While these circumstances agitated men's minds, there appeared an impostor, named Mohammed ebn Ishmael, who asserted that the Khaliph was an incarnation of the invisible Imám, and consequently should be revered as a god on earth: at the same time he changed his name from Hakem Be-amr-illah, "governing by the decree of God," to Hakem Be-amr-eh, "governing by his own authority." The infatuated Khaliph readily adopted an opinion so flattering to his vanity; numerous converts were made to a creed patronized by the sovereign, and they were named Druses, from *durz*, an Arabic word signifying "enjoyment," either because they were supposed to be influenced by the hope of temporal gain, or, as they asserted, because to them alone would the enjoyment of eternal felicity be conceded. They preferred, however, the name of Unitarians, asserting that they alone rightly understood the doctrine of the Divine Unity. Hamza ebn Ali, surnamed Al Hadi, or "the director," was the most active missionary of the new creed; he declared that Mohammed knew nothing but the Tenzil, or literal interpretation of what was revealed; but that Al Hakem was acquainted with the Sawil, or allegorical sense,

which was true and perfect wisdom. Hamza made many converts in Syria, for he was a man of ready eloquence; his doctrines, that ritual observances were useless, and that the elect were free from the obligations of the moral law, gratified a barbarous population, demoralized by a long continuance of civil wars. He asserted that the Korán itself taught the superiority of faith over Islámism, and quoted a passage in which Mohammed reproves the tribe of Asad for embracing his religion merely from temporal motives. "The Arabs of the desert say, We believe. Answer, Ye do by no means believe, but say, We have embraced Islám; for the faith hath not yet entered into your hearts."

The chief difference between the Druses and other Ismaelian sects is the authority they attribute to Al Hakem, and their reverence for a charter of faith, which he is said to have bequeathed to his followers. It is, however, singular that though they believe in the Korán, they are so far from reverencing Mohammed as a prophet, that they never pronounce his name without cursing his memory. The pretensions of Al Hakem filled Egypt and Syria with confusion; he cruelly persecuted Jews, Christians, and orthodox Mussulmans; but at length he was assassinated by command of his sister, on the top of a mountain, whither he was accustomed to go daily, under the pretence of receiving supernatural communications. His body having been kept concealed for some time, it was asserted by his followers that he had been translated to heaven, and that he will at some future time appear upon earth. The following Druse account of Al Hakem has been published by Baron de Sacy.

"The birth of our Lord Hakem, glory and blessing be upon his memory. Our Lord Hakem (glory be to his name) was the son of Ismael, the descendant of Ali, the

son of Abú-Taleb; and his mother was of the race of Fatima, the daughter of Mohammed, the son of Abdallah. He was born at Misr (Cairo). He disappeared from the earth, after having sojourned on it thirty-six years and seven months. He wrote a venerable charter, and suspended it in the mosques, just before the time of his departure. We expect his return in a short time, if it so pleases him. He will reign on the earth through ages of ages. Those whom he has invited to the profession of his unity, and who have not obeyed his call, that is to say, men of every religion but that which he has taught, shall be subjected to him, cast into chains, compelled to pay an annual tribute, and forced to wear distinctive marks upon their dress. But the Unitarians shall reign with him through ages of ages.

“We are those who have been put in possession of the faith, after the religion of Mohammed the son of Abdallah: may the malediction of the Lord be upon him.”

After the death of Hakem, a document was found suspended in one of the mosques, purporting to be the charter of faith which he bequeathed to his disciples. This singular production has been recently published by Baron de Sacy in his *Chrestomathie Arabe*, and well deserves the attention of the curious: it is regarded by the Druses with more veneration than the Korán.

The Khaliph commences his charter by enumerating all the benefits that he had procured for true believers, and dwells especially on the great increase both of the wealth and power of Egypt during his reign. He insinuates that many had shown themselves ungrateful and insensible of the high privileges procured for them; privileges of which they could not be ignorant, since Jews, Christians, and Infidels were compelled to wear a distinctive dress, and

to humble themselves before the true believers. For the instruction of the faithful *a house of wisdom* had been opened in Cairo, provided with every convenience that students could desire; yet the Egyptians wilfully persevered in their ignorance, and opposed many salutary ordinances* issued by their royal prophet. Such conduct only tended to degrade them to the level of the corrupted Greeks and the barbarous Khazars (a Turkish tribe north-west of the Caspian Sea), and was wholly unworthy of those to whom the mystery of the Divine Unity had been revealed, and who had been made acquainted with the mystic and secret sense of the Korán. He then concludes, solemnly exhorting his disciples to reflect on the fearful responsibility they would incur, if they neglected the gracious message which their Khaliph, according to his divine commission, had revealed.

The Druses practise neither circumcision, prayer, nor fasting; they drink wine, eat swine's flesh, and marry within the prohibited degrees. Like the other Ismaelian sects, they are divided into the initiated and the profane, and have different degrees of initiation. They wear a white turban as an emblem of purity, and believe that they will be contaminated by touching the uninitiated. Pride

* Of these ordinances and their causes, Macrisi gives us the following amusing catalogue. "He ordered the Jews and Christians to bear black marks upon their dresses, because black was the cognizance of his rivals, the Abasside Khaliphs; he forbade his subjects to eat certain beans, because they had been the favourite food of Moáwiyah, the first Ommiade Khaliph; he prohibited the use of one herb, because it was named after Ayesha (daughter of Abú-Bekr, and wife of Mohammed); and of another, because it derived its name from the Abasside Khaliph, Motéwakkel. Finally, he forbade beer to be made or sold, because Ali ebn Abú-Taleb, whom he claimed as his ancestor, had once expressed a dislike to that beverage."

leads to fanaticism; they hate all of a different faith, but especially Europeans, on account of a tradition current among them, that some western nation will destroy their commonwealth; hence the greatest insult one Druse can offer to another is to say, "May God put a hat on you." All the ceremonies of their religion are studiously enveloped in mystery; their mosques are isolated, built usually on the tops of hills, and none but the initiated are admitted to them. In their sanctuaries the veiled figure of a calf is religiously preserved, which they regard as the symbol of the invisible Imám; this is rarely uncovered, and never but to those who have obtained the higher degrees in the faith. Secrecy is enjoined as a most important duty to the initiated, as appears from the following Druse document, published by Bishop Adler.

"Be it the first and chief law to tell no person concerning our master. To disclose these secrets will be deemed the greatest evil and most atrocious crime. Whoever shall betray the least of those secrets, let him be slain without mercy in the public assembly of the Druses as an apostate. Wherefore take the utmost care to keep our secrets concealed. Let it be lawful for no one, except the chief of the initiated, to read them, and this only in a remote place, where no one but the initiated, who have previously proved their faith, shall be present. It is likewise forbidden to remove our sacred book, or the chest in which the symbol of our master's human nature is preserved, from the house of the chief initiated, where it is kept. That figure of our master is made of gold and silver. If that book of our master be found in the possession of any infidel, or if any of the profane acquire knowledge of our master, let them be torn in pieces. Observe these precepts diligently, ye faithful,

whose duty it is to preserve our secrets, and manifest your zeal."

One of the Druse images was brought to Rome during the last century, and placed in the Borgian Museum; it is a rude figure of a calf, made of brass, which probably was once gilt, and it contains a long inscription in some secret character which has not been deciphered.

The secret societies of the Druses are accused of abominable crimes; and there is reason to fear that the imputation is not wholly groundless. Those who are uninitiated show no sense of religion whatever.

The Druse government is a species of aristocratic republic, and is frequently distracted by civil wars between the emirs or chiefs. One of them enjoys nominal supremacy, but his authority is disregarded, save in his having the privilege of assessing the tribute paid to the Turks, on the different chiefs of districts in proportion to their wealth. No nation so strictly observes the laws of hospitality. Whoever presents himself at their doors as a suppliant or traveller, is sure to receive not merely a generous but an affectionate reception. "I have frequently," says Volney, "seen the poor peasant give his last morsel of bread to a hungry passenger; and when I blamed the imprudence of the action, it was replied, *God is liberal and generous, and all men are brothers*. When once the guest has eaten bread and salt with them, nothing can induce them to violate the obligation. During the last century an Aga of the Janissaries, who had committed some crime, fled from Damascus, and sought refuge among the Druses. The pacha having learned the place of his retreat, demanded him of the chief emir, who, in his turn, ordered the Sheikh Talliúk, with whom the fugitive resided, to send him back a prisoner. Talliúk returned an

indignant refusal, the emir threatened violence, the chief armed his dependents. The emir then threatened that he would cut down fifty mulberry-trees every day until the Aga was given up, and actually began to put his menace into execution. A thousand trees fell, and Talliúk remained unmoved. The other sheikhs began now to take a share in the dispute, and civil war would have been inevitable, had not the Aga, ashamed to have excited so much disturbance, secretly left the dwelling of his generous host, and sought another place of refuge."

Though the Druse women are allowed to become members of the secret society, and when initiated, to witness the most mysterious rites, yet they are in a more degraded state than any other females in the East. Divorce is permitted to the husband at his pleasure; if the wife asks permission to go out, and the husband replies, "Go," without adding the words, "and come back," she is thereby divorced, and cannot be taken back without going through the formality of being married and divorced by a third person, according to the Turkish law.

The Druse children rarely receive a literary education; but they are permitted to be present at the councils and meetings of the elders, and to hear political and military matters discussed. A stranger is frequently astonished to hear children of ten or twelve years of age freely discussing the politics of Syria and Egypt, the probabilities of war and peace, the military merits of the different clans, and the justice or injustice of the last tributary assessment.

The relations between superiors and inferiors are of a very republican character; the chief emir himself would not deem it a degradation to admit the meanest peasant to his table: hence their intercourse is marked by those traits of rustic simplicity which recall the memory of the patriarchal

ages. But with this simplicity are mingled some of the worst features of savage life; deadly revenge, brutal ferocity, and a contempt for the salutary restraints of domestic life. Every writer by whom they have been mentioned, has complained of the difficulty there is in obtaining accurate information respecting their religion and laws. Their Turkish neighbours are just as ignorant on the subject as the Christian travellers by whom they have been visited; for they outwardly conform to the established religion, and practise their own peculiar rites only in their secret meetings. Baron de Sacy has devoted several years to the collection of materials for a history of this sect; the portions of it which he has published in his *Arabic Chrestomathy* are better calculated to excite than to gratify curiosity*.

* See a full account of the present condition of the Druses, in *Three Weeks in Palestine*.

CHAPTER XI.

THE WAHABEES.

THE name of this sect attracted the attention of Europe in the beginning of the present century; it was erroneously supposed that its founder intended to propagate a new religion, and subvert that of Mohammed; nor was the error removed until Lord Valentia published in his *Travels*, the profession of faith, issued by the Wahabee chief, after the capture of Mecca. This document was to the following purport: "There is only one God. He is God, and Mohammed is his prophet. Act according to the Korán and the sayings of Mohammed. It is unnecessary for you to pray for the blessing of God upon the prophet more than once in your life. You are not to invoke the prophet to intercede with God in your behalf, for his intercession will be of no avail. At the day of judgment it will avail you. Do not call on the prophet; call on God alone."

Abd-el-Wahab, the founder of the sect, was a native of the province of Nedjed, in Arabia. Having acquired considerable knowledge of the sciences, he visited Persia in search of further information, and there became disgusted with the idolatrous corruptions which had been introduced into Islamism. On his return home, he proclaimed his design of restoring Mohammedanism to the purity in which it had been left by its founder, reprobating especially the worship of Imáms and Saints, the attribution of a mediatorial character to Mohammed, the doctrine of the Korán's eternal existence, and the superiority of faith over moral obedience. To the prohibition of wine, he added that of spirituous liquors, tobacco, or any other exhilarating article.

Abd-el-Wahab was consequently what may be termed, a Mohammedan puritan; so far was he from proposing a new creed, that the doctors of the law at Cairo, his fiercest political opponents, declared, after a close examination, that they could find nothing heretical in his publications. The preaching of Abd-el-Wahab attracted little attention until he converted the head of a tribe, Mohammed-ebn-Saoud, a warlike chief, who resided at Derayah. Political interests were then united with religious reform, and it was resolved to unite the Bedouins in a confederation, similar to that established by Mohammed. Abd-el-Aziz, the son of the first leader, succeeded in spreading his influence over the greater part of Arabia; but he was assassinated in 1803, and succeeded by his son Saoud, the most distinguished propagator of the Wahabee doctrines. His armies spread themselves over the entire peninsula, destroying the tombs and chapels that had been erected to the memory of Mohammedan saints, closing all shops where prohibited luxuries were sold, and punishing those who used more splendid dresses than were consistent with the simple taste of the Bedouins. At length, on the 27th of April, 1803, the Wahabees became masters of Mecca, where an enemy's face had not been seen for nearly twelve hundred years. They demolished all the magnificent sepulchres erected over the family and followers of Mohammed, not sparing even the monument of the venerable Khadijah; they plundered the holy place of its treasures, but they would not allow the Kaaba to be injured. The Meccans had little reason to regret the conquest, for their former governor, the Sheriffe Ghaleb, was a monster of iniquity, but Saoud was a wise and generous victor. Soon after he had taken possession of the city, Saoud wrote a characteristic letter to the Sultan, informing him of his victory.

“Saoud to Selim.

“I ENTERED Mecca on the 4th day of Moharrem, in the 1218th year of the Hegira. I kept peace towards the inhabitants, I destroyed all the tombs which they idolatrously worshipped. I abolished the levying of all customs above two and a half per cent. I confirmed the Cadi whom you had appointed to govern in the place, agreeably to the commands of Mohammed. I desire that in the ensuing years, you will give orders to the Pachas of Shaum, Syria, Misr, and Egypt, not to come accompanied by the Mahamel (an ornamental covering annually sent to the Kaaba), trumpets and drums, into Mecca and Medina. For why? Religion is not profited by these things. Peace be between us, and may the blessing of God be unto you. Dated on the 10th day of Moharrem (May 3rd.)”

In the following year, Medina was taken, and the same fanatical rage against sepulchral monuments displayed; while in the act of destroying them, the Wahabees were heard to exclaim, “God have mercy upon those who destroyed, and none upon those who built them.” Even the large dome over Mohammed’s tomb was menaced with ruin; Saoud commanded that it should be demolished, but the solidity of its structure defied the rude efforts of the Bedouins, and several of them having been killed, by falling from the dome, the attempt was laid aside. This the Medinese ascribed to the interposition of Providence. They had previously destroyed the tomb of Hossein, at Kerbela, and that of his father Ali, so highly venerated by the Persians.

The fear of the Wahabees soon spread over the East; the British, fearing that commerce would be endangered, sent some forces from India to aid the Imám of Moscat

against them, and thus effectually checked their progress on the coast of the Red Sea. At length, in 1811, Mohammed Ali, the celebrated Pacha of Egypt, prepared to restore Arabia to the Turkish dominions. The Wahabees soon found this able, but cruel leader, a formidable foe; his soldiers, instructed in European discipline by several renegades, were an over-match for the sons of the desert, and three sacks of Wahabees' ears were sent to Constantinople, as testimonies of his success. Medina and Mecca were soon after recovered, and the restoration of the holy cities to the empire of the Sultan was celebrated with the most extravagant joy throughout the Turkish dominions. While Saoud lived, however, the Wahabees maintained a vigorous contest, but on his death in 1814, disputes arose about the succession, and his son Abdallah, who finally obtained the chieftaincy, lost the confidence of the leading Scheikhs. In the latter end of 1818, the ferocious Ibrahim, to whom his father had intrusted the conduct of the war, totally defeated Abdallah, and made him prisoner. He was sent in chains to Constantinople, publicly tried before the Divan, and put to death with his principal followers.

The severity of Ibrahim did not put an end to the Wahabite spirit of resistance; the scattered bands still maintain a roving independence in the desert, and one troop, commanded by the heroic daughter of Abd-el-Wahab, has more than once met the Turkish forces in the field. Late accounts assert, that the principles of the sect are propagated in secret, and that the converts are very numerous. It is probable, that in the present crisis of affairs, Arabia will be withdrawn from the rule of the Sultan, but whether it will become an independent state, or be annexed to the new empire of Egypt, time alone must determine.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FOUR ORTHODOX SECTS.

THE imperfections of the Korán as a civil and religious code were early felt: the number of unprovided rules, even if Mohammedanism had been confined to the peninsula of Arabia, would have been considerable, but when the religion was established in new countries, and over a wide space, not only were the laws found deficient in number, but many which had been formed for the peculiar circumstances, were found incapable of execution in countries whose situation was wholly different. The number of heresies that appeared, the sanguinary wars they occasioned, and perhaps a dread that the frame-work of society would not subsist unless supported by positive institutions, induced the Khaliphs of Bagdad to search for those traditionary sayings of Mohammed, which might be wrested into directions respecting the omitted cases of the Korán. From both the written and unwritten word was formed a code, certainly far from being perfect, but still possessing the great virtue of elasticity, the power of accommodating itself to the changes of time and circumstances. Two new classes were gradually formed in the state, those of priests and lawyers, a circumstance which Mohammed seems not to have anticipated, for in his army, like Cromwell's regiment, the same person filled the office of military guide and religious instructor. More than a century elapsed before the formation of what may be called a law-school in Bagdad; but when once the institution was founded, its necessity became obvious; the

reception of traditions rendering doctors of the law as necessary to the Mohammedans as they had been to the Jews.

Abú-Hanifa was the first of the Islamite casuists; he learned the dogmas of the Mohammedan faith, and the principal traditions from persons who had been cotemporary with Mohammed, and though he is now regarded as the chief authority among the Sonnites, he was through life a devoted partisan of the family of Ali. His stern rectitude displeased the Khaliph, and when he refused to accept the office of judge, he was thrown into prison. During his confinement, he is said to have read the Korán through seven thousand times. D'Ohsson assures us that he was poisoned by command of the Khaliph, for having in the council of the Ulemas, or doctors of the law, resisted the severe punishment which the monarch wished to inflict on the rebellious citizens of Mosúl, in the 150th year of the Hegira (A.D. 767). The Hanefites are usually called "the followers of reason," because they are principally guided by their own judgment in giving a decision; the other sects adhere more closely to the letter of tradition. This sect was first established in Irák; it is now the established faith of the Turks and Tartars, but it is branched into numerous subdivisions.

From the love of marvellous coincidence, natural to half-civilized nations, the Arabian writers have asserted that Al Shafei, the founder of the second orthodox sect, was born on the very day that Abú-Hanifa died. His fame as a scholar, was principally established in Egypt. The celebrated Saladin so highly valued the tenets of this doctor, that he founded a college in Cairo, where nothing else was permitted to be taught; at present this sect is almost wholly confined to Arabia.

The third of the orthodox sects in importance, but the second in the order of time, owes its origin to Málec-ebn-Ans, a native of Medina, who flourished in the reign of the celebrated Khaliph, Harún-al-Raschid. He was remarkable for strenuously insisting on the literal acceptation of the prohibitory precepts; being asked whether it was lawful to eat of the porpoise, or sea-hog, he replied in the negative, observing in support of his decision, that though it was really a fish, yet as it bore the name of a prohibited animal, it must be considered as included in the prophet's edict against swine's-flesh. On his death-bed, he bitterly lamented that in too many of his decisions he had followed his own opinions rather than the literal sense of the Korán, and the sacred traditions. The doctrines of Malec prevail chiefly in Barbary and some other parts of Africa.

Ahmed-ebn-Hanbal, the founder of the fourth orthodox sect, was a cotemporary and friend of Al Shafei; he is said to have been so well versed in the traditions of Mohammed, that he could repeat no less than a million of them by rote. In his age arose the celebrated controversy respecting the eternity of the Korán, a dogma which Ahmed strenuously supported; his vehemence provoked the vengeance of the Khaliph Al Mótasem, who maintained that the Korán was created, and by his command, the teacher was imprisoned and severely scourged. The sect of the Hanbalites prevails principally in the wilder districts of Arabia; its austere tenets being well suited to the simple manners of the Bedouins. From it the sect of the Wahabees appears to have been derived. In the reign of the Khaliph Al Rádi, the Hanbalites, indignant at the progress which luxury had made, excited great commotions at Bagdad, breaking into houses, spilling any wine they discovered, destroying musical instruments, and burning rich garments;

and these disturbances were not quelled without considerable difficulty.

These four doctors are highly venerated by the Sunnites. Their systems are fundamentally the same, both in dogmatic and speculative theology; they differ chiefly on ceremonial points, and questions of civil or political administration. They all join in hostility to the house of Ali, and the Shiites who support his cause; so far is this hatred carried, that the Mufti and chief doctors of the law have more than once unanimously declared, "To slay a Persian Shiah is more acceptable to God, than to slay seventy Christians or idolaters." Having already quoted several Shiite documents, we shall here insert a curious Sunnite state-paper, the letter addressed by Sultan Selim I. (A.D. 1514), to the Persian monarch Shah Ismail.

"Selim to Ismail.

"THE Supreme Being, who is the sovereign disposer of human destiny, the source of all knowledge, and all intelligence and wisdom, says in his holy scripture, that true divine worship is to be found in the Mussulman religion alone, and that he who joins himself to any other creed, far from being heard and saved, shall on the contrary, be in the number of those condemned at the final judgment. The God of truth adds, that his counsels and decrees are immutable; that all the actions of men should have reference to him, and that he who turns from the true path, shall be condemned to the flames of hell and eternal torments. Place us, O Lord, in the number of the true believers, who walk in the ways of salvation, and diligently keep from the road of infidelity and perdition: may thy holiest benedictions rest upon Mohammed, the prince of both worlds, the

chief of the prophets, and may it extend to all his posterity and all his disciples.

“The monarch of the Ottomans; the master of all the heroes and valiant men of the age, who equals Feridún* in force and power, Alexander the Great† in majesty and glory, and Kai Khosrau‡ in equity and clemency, the ex-

* Feridún is said to have been placed upon the throne by the heroic exertions of the blacksmith, Gavah, whose insurrection against Zahák is, as we have already mentioned, one of the circumstances most celebrated in Persian history, or rather in the Persian legends. Mirkhond gives the following character of Feridún: “The unanimous accord of the most distinguished writers represents him as an intrepid monarch, and magnificent sovereign; a world in the form of universal sway; a universe in the robes of royal authority; who to the strictest discipline and government joined the perfection of reason and discernment. In this reign the institutes of bravery and humanity were widely diffused; the foundations of munificence and bounty acquired new strength;

“Feridún the happy was not an angel,
Neither was he formed of musk and ambergris:
He acquired his glory by justice and liberality.—
Be thou just and liberal, and thou also wilt be a Feridún.”

SHEA'S *Mirkhond*, 135.

† See above, page 37.

‡ This prince, the Cyrus of the Greek historians, and the Kóresh of the Holy Scriptures, is one of the most celebrated heroes of the East. His traditionary history is full of fables, but still it confirms, in all the leading particulars, the narrative of Herodotus, and the circumstances recorded by the prophet Daniel. (See *Dublin University Review*, No. IV.) Mirkhond gives him the following character: “This prince was the precious pearl of the necklace of fortunate sovereigns, the most excellent production of the seven heavens and the four elements: such was his might that he could cope with the empyreal heaven and the revolving skies; the irresistible force of his mandates appeared as a type of destiny and an example of fate. No sooner had the sound of the imperial kettle-drum reached the hearing of the human race, than the kings of remote regions, and the

terminator of infidels and idolaters, the destroyer of the enemies of the orthodox faith, the terror of the tyrants and Pharaohs of this age, who humbles unjust and haughty princes, who breaks to pieces the sceptres and crowns of the greatest potentates of the earth; the glorious Sultan Selim Khan, son of the Sultan Bayezid (Bajazet) Khan, son of the Sultan Múrad Khan, addresses graciously these words to thee, Emir Ismail, who art the ruler of Persia, the commander of that kingdom's forces, the Zahák* of the East, the Afrasiáb† of thine age,

rulers of every realm, assembled under the shadow of the standard distinguished by victory; and Kai Khosrau, both by hereditary right and superior talent, assumed the reins of empire, and regulated the arrangement of public affairs. He rescued from violence and oppression, the cultivators who had been buffeted and trampled under foot by tyranny: he always regarded as an imperative duty the conferring of grace and honour, benefits and notice, on all men, in proportion to their state, and suitably to their rank."—SHEA'S *Mirkhond*, 244.

* Zahák is said, by the Persian writers, to have been an Arabian tyrant, sent by Providence as a scourge to punish the arrogance of Jemsheed (probably the Achæmenes of the Greeks). The Persians exhaust all the epithets of their copious language in describing his atrocious tyranny. At length he was punished by two large serpents springing from his shoulders, who fed upon his flesh; Eblis, or Satan, is said to have inflicted the disease by a treacherous kiss, and afterwards suggested as a remedy a plaster of young men's brains. Mirkhond gravely asserts, that the Kurds are descended from some of the young men destined to be sacrificed for supplying these plasters, who escaped to the mountains. Zahák, after his defeat by Feridún, was put to death by torture.

† The crimes and misfortunes of Afrasiáb (probably the Astyages of the Greeks), are celebrated throughout the East, and form the subject of a well-known proverb,

"The owl hath built her nest in the palace of the Cæsars,
And the spider spread her web in the halls of Afrasiáb."

He is said to have murdered Siyáwesh (Cambyses), the husband of

the Daráb* of modern times, to inform thee that the works framed by the hands of the Most Highest are not the frail productions of caprice and folly, but that they contain an infinity of mysteries which the human mind cannot penetrate. God himself says, in his holy book, 'We have not created the heavens and the earth to make a sport of them.' Man, who is the most noble and most excellent of creatures, the abridgment of God's wonders, is consequently the image and representative of his adorable Creator; as we see in this sacred passage, 'He hath appointed you his deputies

his daughter, and to have prepared the same fate for her infant son, afterwards the celebrated Kai Khosrau, but Pirán Wisah (Harpagus) rescued the child, and educated him in secret until he had attained sufficient age to assert his claim to the Persian crown. One of Kai Khosrau's earliest expeditions was against the murderer of his father; Afrasiáb was completely defeated; some say that he fell in battle, others that he was brought into the presence of Kai Khosrau, and slain with the very dagger which had been used in the murder of Siyáwesh. It is scarcely necessary to remark the similarity between the Persian account of this incident and that given by Herodotus.

* According to the Persians, Felikoos, King of Room (Philip of Macedon), was compelled to pay a thousand golden eggs as tribute to the Persian monarch, and to give him his daughter in marriage. The Persian despot, taking some dislike to the princess, sent her back to Felikoos when pregnant: her son was Iskander (Alexander the Great), whom Felikoos educated as his heir. On the accession of Daráb the Less (Darius Codomannus), ambassadors were sent to demand the payment of the customary tribute, which had been discontinued for several years. Iskander replied, that "the bird which had laid those eggs was flown." Both monarchs prepared for war, and the Persian monarchy was overthrown at Arbela. It must be said, in extenuation of this legend, that Thrace and Macedon were tributary to the first Persian monarchs of the Hystaspid dynasty. The fable of Iskander's origin is manifestly an invention to soothe national vanity.

upon the earth,' and that, because uniting the faculties of a spiritual nature to a material body, man is the only created being that can know the attributes of the Deity, and worship his adorable perfections. But the excellence of this quality of man, and the acquisition of true knowledge, can only be found in the Mussulman doctrine, and in submission to the holy law of the prince of the prophets, the true vicar and vicegerent of the God of mercy. It is only in the purity of this holy religion, that man can prosper in this world, and acquire eternal glory in the next. But, Emir Ismail, a like felicity shall never be your lot, because you have turned your face from the sanctity of the divine laws, because you have departed from the path of salvation and of the holy commandments, because you have altered the purity of the Mussulman doctrines, dishonoured and destroyed the true worship of God, and usurped the empire of the East by unjust and tyrannical means; because, sprung from the dust, you have raised yourself, by odious methods, to the throne of grandeur and magnificence; because you have opened to Mussulmans the gates of tyranny and oppression; because, to the practices of an impious sect, you have joined iniquity, infidelity, and blasphemy; because, covered with the mantle of falsehood and hypocrisy, you have planted trouble and sedition in every quarter; because you have raised the standard of heterodoxy and irreligion; because that, delivering yourself up to caprice and passion, you have had the impiety to relax the sacred bonds of Mussulman law, and permit the practice of libertinism, the massacre of many virtuous and respectable persons, the destruction of mosques and sanctuaries, the demolition of the tombs of the saints, contempt for interpreters and doctors of the law, and for emirs sprung from the blood of the prophet; because you have dishonoured the

holy Korán, and sanctioned the anathemas pronounced against the legitimate and venerable Khaliphs (Abú-Bekr, Omar, and Othman).

“ As it is the duty of every zealous and pious prince in particular, and of all the Mussulman people in general, to observe these holy words, ‘O true believers, execute the will of the Most High,’ our Ulemas and doctors of the law have all, with one accord, pronounced sentence of death against such an impious and blaspheming wretch as you, imposing on every true Mussulman the obligation to arm himself with zeal and ardour for the defence of religion, for the destruction of heresy and impiety in your person, and in that of your partisans and supporters.

“ Animated by the spirit of this solemn decree, in conformity with that sacred book, which is the genuine code of divine precepts, and inflamed with a holy anxiety, such as an earnest zeal to fulfil my royal duties should inspire, of strengthening Islámism on the one hand, and, on the other, of delivering from your yoke the people and the nations who groan under the weight of your tyranny and impiety ; we have resolved to lay aside our imperial ornaments, to assume the cuirass and coat of mail, to display our invincible banners, to summon to the field our gallant warriors, to draw our glorious weapons from the scabbard of our anger and indignation, and to send forward our troops, whose sabre spares none, the wounds of whose lances are always mortal, and whose arrows would reach an enemy even in the constellation of Sagittarius. In consequence of this noble and firm resolution, we have already taken the field, and, marching under the protection of the Most High, we hope soon to strike down the arm of wickedness and tyranny ; to drive from your head those delusive dreams of greatness and glory which mislead you ; to deliver

the feeble and the oppressed from the cruel yoke of your domination; finally, to stifle you in the noisome smoke and devouring flames of those conflagrations which your perverse and seditious projects have kindled; thus verifying upon you the proverb, 'He who sows thorns shall reap calamities and misfortunes.' In the mean time, according to the law of our holy prophet, we desire, before coming to blows, to send you instead of the sabre our sacred Korán, and exhort you to embrace the orthodox faith; and it is for this reason that we send you our present imperial letter.

"Every man has a different natural disposition, and the human race is like mines of gold and silver. There are men, whose perverse character forms in them a second nature, and renders them incorrigible; they resemble Negroes, who would vainly strive to make themselves white. There are others who correct their errors, who return from their evil ways; but with them evil is not inveterate, because, attentive to themselves, they mortify their passions, and repress the vicious inclinations of nature. The most efficacious means to cure such evils, is for a person to open his eyes to his own iniquities, to ask pardon of them from the God of mercy, with sentiments of true repentance and profound contrition. Wherefore we exhort you to renounce your errors, and to march with a firm step towards the paths of salvation. We demand of you, at the same time, to resign the possession of those provinces which were heretofore annexed to the Ottoman empire, to renounce all your unjust pretensions over them, and to restore them to our dominion, by the hand of our deputies and officers; this is a course of conduct which will contribute both to your preservation and your happiness. But if, unfortunately for yourself, you should persist in your

present delusion, and, intoxicated with notions of your greatness, your power, and your idle bravery, you should obstinately persevere in your blind, iniquitous, and perverse conduct, soon shall you see the vast plains, now subject to your tyrannical and usurping hand, covered with our tents and brilliant standards, hidden beneath the columns of our victorious troops. There shall they exercise their valour and intrepidity, and there shall they accomplish the decrees predetermined in the counsels of the Most High, who is the God of armies, and the sovereign Judge of human actions.

“In conclusion, safety be to him who pursues the path of safety.”

The war that followed this remarkable epistle, gave the Turks possession of Syria, Egypt, part of Irák, and northern Arabia, including the sacred cities of Mecca and Medina. In the next century, Sháh Abbas appeared as the avenger of the Shiites, and exacted ample retribution. He was particularly severe against the Sonnite doctors of the law, whom he regarded, not without reason, as the principal instigators of those religious wars. Even at the present moment, when both Persia and Turkey are threatened with ruin by the colossal power of Russia, religious dissensions will probably prevent them from combining for their common safety. A friend has permitted us to see a letter from Tabriz; in which it is said that Abbas Mirza*, the presumptive heir of Persia, is superior to sectarian prejudices, but so was Nadir Sháh, and yet he failed to conciliate the Sonnites and Shiites.

* Since this was written, we regret to say, that intelligence has been received of Mirza's death. Persia has reason to lament the premature decease of a prince so eminently accomplished.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MONASTIC ORDERS OF ISLAMISM.

THERE is scarcely any fact more striking in the history of the human race, than the similarity between the errors and superstitions of countries, distant thousands of miles from each other, and of generations, between which many centuries have intervened. Even national legends and traditional jests, present curious and unexpected points of resemblance; Whittington and his Cat is a tale naturalized in every country between the Pacific and Atlantic, and the same may be said of Cinderella and the Glass Slipper. Many persons rest satisfied with saying, that "human nature will always exhibit the same developements under the same circumstances," but this principle will only account for general resemblances, not for the absolute identity of particulars, because human nature is never twice exhibited under absolutely the same circumstances. If, however, we can find a superstitious practice re-appearing at different times in the world, whose local progress has been always in the same direction, and if we find the same road nearly at the same times travelled by opinions from which that practice would necessarily result, it seems probable, that by tracing back this road, we may find some country with strong claims to be regarded as the parent both of the opinion and the practice.

Monastic institutions have been grafted on the different religions of Europe and Western Asia, without having any

connexion with the fundamental principles of any of them. Perhaps, an exception might have been found in the ecclesiastical corporations of ancient Egypt; but, as these ceased to have existence before the age when Egypt's authentic history begins, nothing can be said with certainty on the subject. The first promulgation of ascetic principles with which we have any acquaintance, is amongst the Persian Magi, where we find them connected with secret associations for political purposes. From the East they were brought to Europe by Pythagoras, and extensively circulated through Greece and Southern Italy. Combined with these practices we find mystic speculations, respecting the nature of Deity, the origin of evil, &c., precisely similar to those that occur in the sacred and philosophical books of the Hindús. The associations both of the Magi and the Pythagoreans were found inconsistent with the security of civil government, and both were suppressed by the strong arm of power.

Not a trace of monastic institutions can be found in the Jewish history, before the return from the Babylonish captivity; soon after that event we find a species of monks called Essenes, forming communities in Palestine, but flourishing most in the Egyptian Alexandria, which seems to have been the great depôt for Indian opinions as well as Indian merchandise. Philo, the great expounder of the doctrines held by those who were termed the philosophical Jews, advocates in the same breath, the practices of the Essenes and the mystic theology of the East. The great calamities which subsequently fell on the Jewish nation, broke up these associations, but traces of ascetism are still to be found among the modern Jews.

What is usually termed Gnosticism, was the first corruption of Christianity; it began before the generation

which had witnessed Christ's miracles had disappeared from the earth; the speculations of the Gnostics have been traced by ecclesiastical historians to Persia and Egypt, and it would require very little research, to show that both these countries obtained them from India. Concurrently with these mystic speculations, two corrupt practices were introduced into the Christian church,—monastic institutions, and the celibacy of the clergy.

Without paying any regard to the evil which regulations so utterly inconsistent with human nature and with God's positive command, must necessarily bring upon the Christian church; wanting either the capacity or inclination to investigate the relations of these laws to those of climate, social condition, or individual strength; without foreseeing that they must necessarily, in many instances, lead to private crime and public hypocrisy; these rash innovators laboured, and not without success, to persuade the vulgar and ignorant, that those who by a life of celibacy showed their contempt for temporal pleasures were safer guides than those who bound themselves to the world by domestic ties. Two vulgar superstitions extensively prevalent in the East, and not wholly unknown to Europe, contributed to their success. The doctrine of works of supererogation, and the corollary, that atonement may be made for crime by vicarious penance, exists in Hindústan at the present hour, carried indeed to an excess, which it has never attained in Western countries; the writings of Origen show us that opinions so gratifying to our corrupt nature were extensively spread over the East, in the early ages of Christianity. The second superstitious opinion was, that men by marriage became doubly liable to the influence of evil genii, and traces of this belief may be found in most countries of Europe and Asia. Consequently it was supposed, that

those who lived in celibacy were more pure teachers, were able to confer spiritual advantages on their disciples, and were less subject to the influence of malignant demons. These errors were condemned at their very birth, so easy was it to foresee the troubles and disorders that they would occasion in the church. In fact, the sixth of the canons attributed falsely to the Apostles, but certainly belonging to an early age of Christianity, excommunicates the bishops and priests who repudiate their wives under the pretence of religion; and the fifty-first canon orders that unmarried priests should be deposed. But notwithstanding these laws, the celibacy of the clergy and monastic institutions prevailed, and have been found, at various times, formidable engines of political power.

The monastic orders of the Mohammedans are numerous; it is said that some of them were founded in the very beginning of Islámism, but certainly they did not become remarkable until after the faith of the Korán had been corrupted by the new doctrines introduced after the conquest of Persia. From that age, there appeared communities of persons calling themselves Fakirs, from an Arabic word signifying "poor men," and Dervishes, from a Persian term, signifying the "threshold of the door," and hence metaphorically, "humility." In Persia, they also obtained the name of Sofis, from Sóf, which signifies a coarse woollen dress, worn by devotees. The orders of these dervishes are numerous; D'Ohsson enumerates the thirty-two principal orders in the following chronological table.

MONASTIC ORDERS OF THE MOHAMMEDANS.

| <i>Name.</i> | <i>Founder.</i> | <i>Place of Founder's Death.</i> | <i>Year of Hegira.</i> | <i>Year of our Lord.</i> |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Olwán | Sheikh Olwán | Jeddah | 149 | 766 |
| Edhemí | Ibrahim ebn-Ed-hem | Damascus | 161 | 777 |
| Bestámí | Báyazíd Bestámí | Jebel Bestám .. | 261 | 874 |
| Sacatí | Sirrí Sacatí | Bagdad | 295 | 907 |
| Cádir | Abdu'l-cádir Gilání | Ditto | 561 | 1165 |
| Rufalí | Seyd Ahmed Rufalí | Ditto | 578 | 1182 |
| Suhherwerdí | Shihabu'ddin Suhherwerdi | Ditto | 602 | 1205 |
| Kubreví | Nejmu'd-din Kubrá | Khwarezm | 617 | 1220 |
| Sházilí | Abu'l Hasan Sházilí | Mecca | 656 | 1258 |
| Mevleví | Jelalo'd-din Mevláná | Conyiah | 672 | 1273 |
| Bedeví | Abu'l-fetan Ahmed Bedeví | Egypt | 675 | 1276 |
| Nacshbendí | Pír Mohammed Nacshbendi | Persia | 719 | 1319 |
| Sádi | Sádu'd-din Jehawí | Damascus | 736 | 1335 |
| Bek-táshí | Haji Bektásh Khorásani .. | Kir-Sheher | 759 | 1357 |
| Khalvetí | Omar Khalvetí | Caisariyeh | 800 | 1397 |
| Zeiní | Zeinud'din Khâfi | Kufah or Cufa .. | 838 | 1434 |
| Bábaí | Abdu'l-ghani Pír Baháí .. | Adrianople | 870 | 1465 |
| Beirámí | Haji Beiram Ancareví | Angora | 876 | 1471 |
| Eshrefo | Eshref Rumí | Chin Izníc | 899 | 1493 |
| Bekrí | Abú-Bekr Vefáí | Aleppo | 902 | 1496 |
| Sunbulí | Sunbul Yúsuf Boleví | Constantinople .. | 936 | 1529 |
| Gulshení or Rushení } | Ibrahim Gulshení | Cairo | 940 | 1533 |
| Yigit Bashí | Shemsu'd-din Yígít Bashí | Magnesia | 951 | 1544 |
| Umm Sinání | Sheikh Umm Sinán | Constantinople .. | 959 | 1552 |
| Jelvetí | Pír Uftádeh Jelvetí | Búrsah | 988 | 1580 |
| Oshákí | Husammu'd-din Oshakí .. | Constantinople .. | 1001 | 1592 |
| Shemsí | Shemsu'd-din Sivasí | Medina | 1010 | 1601 |
| Sinán Ummí | Alím Sinán Ummí | Elmáhlí | 1079 | 1668 |
| Niyázi | Mohammed Niyázi Misri | Lemnos | 1100 | 1694 |
| Musádí | Murád Shámí | Constantinople .. | 1132 | 1719 |
| Nuru'd-diní | Nuru'd-n Jerádhhi | Ditto | 1146 | 1735 |
| Jemálí | Jemalu'd-din Edirneví | Ditto | 1164 | 1750 |

Of these orders, the most numerous, and perhaps the most influential, is that of the Nacshbendies, who resemble more the confraternities in Roman Catholic countries, and the Methodists of England, than regular monks. Without quitting the world, they bind themselves to the strict observance of certain forms of devotion. Every day they repeat the Istaghfar (Lord, have mercy upon us!) at least once; the Salavát (Lord, give thy peace and blessing to

Mohammed and his family, as thou gavest them to Abraham, &c.) seven times; the first chapter of the Korán, seven times; and the 94th and 112th chapters of the same book, nine times. They meet, like the Methodists, once a week, and in the presence of their class-leaders go through the additional forms of devotion. The reigning emperor of Morocco is said to be a member of this confraternity; he is the author of the following hymn, which is daily recited from the minarets throughout his dominions, after the first proclamation for morning prayer.

Glory be to God alone !
The shades of night are fled away,
The ruddy dawn leads in the day,
And light once more to mortal eyes is shown.
Bow before the Eternal King,
To his praise loud anthems sing,
For all the benefits bestowed,
By him, the one, the only God.

But the organization of the other orders is much more rigid. Most of them impose a noviciate, the length of which is usually determined by the opinion that the community forms of the candidate's progress. He is taught to repeat the list of the divine attributes, seven only being communicated at a time, and he is bound to tell all his dreams to his superior, who pretends from them to determine the candidate's progress in divine knowledge.

The Mevlevies are, for many reasons, the most remarkable of the rigid orders. A thousand and one days is the mystic number prescribed for the noviciate, and the place where the candidate receives elementary instruction in spiritual knowledge is no other than the kitchen of the convent. During his noviciate, he is called "the scullion," and it is by "the head-cook," that he is presented to the abbot, or superior, as worthy of full admission. The cook

assists at the ceremony of initiation, and holds the head of the novice, while the superior pronounces over him some verses of the founder, to the following effect :

He who the chains of evil lust has broke,
And cast aside his passions' fatal yoke,
Enjoys a noble power and glorious reign,
Which from the Prophet he alone could gain.

The prayer called Tekbú is then chanted ; after which the chief, or abbot, places upon the head of the novice the cylindrical cap, peculiar to the Mevlevies ; the candidate then sits down beside the cook, while the superior briefly pronounces a form of admission, enumerates the duties of his profession, and recommends the new member to the prayers and good wishes of his brethren.

The mystic philosophy and theology called Sufyism, and which is, in fact, but a modification of pantheism, is very popular with the Mevlevies. The best summary of this extravagant doctrine is contained in the writings of Sir W. Jones. He says, " The Hindú and Persian mystics concur in believing, that the souls of men differ infinitely in *degree* but not at all in *kind*, from the divine soul of which they are particles, and in which they will finally be absorbed ; that the Spirit of God pervades the universe, always immediately present to his work, and consequently, always in substance ; * * * that the beauties of nature are faint resemblances, like images in a mirror, of the Divine charms ; * * * that nothing has a pure absolute existence but mind or spirit ; that material substances, as the ignorant call them, are no more than gay pictures presented continually to our minds by the Sempiternal Artist. * * * From these principles flow a thousand metaphors and other poetical figures in the sacred poems of the Persians and Hindús, who seem to mean the same thing in substance,

and differ only in expression as their languages differ in idiom. The modern Sufis, who profess a belief in the Korán, suppose, with great sublimity both of thought and diction, an *express contract*, on *the day of eternity without beginning*, between the assemblage of created spirits, and the Supreme Soul from which they were detached, when a celestial voice pronounced these words, addressed to each spirit separately, ‘*Art thou not with the Lord?*’ that is, Art thou not bound by a solemn compact with him? and all the spirits answered with one voice, ‘*Yes.*’ ”

The introduction of these Eastern opinions, which were perfectly strange in the religion of Islám, led to the adoption not only of new, but even forbidden practices. Music and dancing were strictly prohibited by the traditions of the Prophet; but several orders of the Dervishes, and more especially the Mevlevies, insisted that the exercise of these, in a mystic sense, was an acceptable form of devotion. The founder of the Mevlevies has described the spiritual application of the *neï*, or flute, in some beautiful verses admirably translated by Sir William Jones.

HEAR, how yon reed, in sadly-pleasing tales,
 Departed bliss and present woe bewails !
 ‘ With me from native banks untimely torn
 Love-warbling youths, and soft-eyed virgins mourn.
 Oh ! let the heart by fatal absence rent,
 Feel what I sing, and bleed when I lament :
 Who roams in exile from his parent bower,
 Pants to return, and chides each lingering hour.
 My notes, in circles of the grave and gay,
 Have ruled the rising, cheered the closing day ;
 Each in my fond affections claimed a part,
 But none discerned the secret of my heart.
 What though my strains and sorrows flow combined !
 Yet ears are slow and carnal eyes are blind,
 Free through each mortal form the spirits roll,
 But sight avails not—Can we see the soul ?’

Such notes breathed gently from yon vocal frame,—
 Breathed, said I?—No—'twas all enlivening flame.
 'Tis love* that fills the reed with warmth divine,
 'Tis love that sparkles in the racy wine.
 Me, plaintive wanderer from my peerless maid,
 The reed has fired, and all my soul betrayed.
 He gives the bane and He with balsam cures;
 Afflicts, yet soothes, impassions, yet allures.
 Delightful pangs his amorous tales prolong,
 And Leila's frantic lover† lives in song.
 Not he who reasons best, this wisdom knows:
 Ears only drink what rapturous tongues disclose;
 Nor fruitless deem the reed's heart-piercing pain;
 See sweetness dropping from the parted cane.
 Alternate hope and fear my days divide,
 I courted Grief, and Anguish was my bride.
 Flow on, sad stream of life! I smile secure,
 THOU livest, THOU, the purest of the pure!
 Rise, vigorous youth! Be free; be nobly bold:
 Shall chains confine you, though they blaze with gold?
 Go; to your vase the gathered main convey:
 What were your stores? The pittance of a day!
 New plans for wealth your fancies would invent;
 Yet shells, to nourish pearls, must lie content.
 The man, whose robe love's purple arrows rend,
 Bids avarice rest and toils tumultuous end.
 Hail, heavenly love! true source of endless gains!
 Thy balm restores me, and thy skill sustains.
 Oh! more than Galen learned, than Plato wise!
 My guide, my law, my joy supreme, arise!
 Love warms this frigid clay with mystic fire;
 And dancing mountains leap with young desire.
 Blest is the soul, that swims in seas of love,
 And long the life sustained by food above.
 With forms imperfect can perfection dwell?
 Here pause my song, and thou, vain world, farewell.

* Love divine, of which the Sufis regard earthly love as the imperfect type.

* Mejnún went mad for love of Leila; the Sufi poets represent this as a type of man deprived of intercourse with heaven.

This singular, and we may add, hazardous mixture of luxuriant imagery with ascetic sentiments, is the common characteristic of the Turkish and Persian poetry, for most poets of both countries belong to some order of Dervishes, and are more or less tainted with Sufyism. The style is not without a parallel even in Europe; the life of St. Catherine may be quoted as an example, but the subject is too painful to our feelings to be examined at greater length.

The mystic dances of the Mevlevies differ from those of the other orders, and are very singular exhibitions. Nine, eleven, or thirteen of the fraternity squat down on sheep-skins in a circle; the floor of the dancing-room is circular, its design being manifestly borrowed from a tent. They remain for nearly an hour perfectly silent, with their eyes closed, as if absorbed in meditation. The president then invites his brethren to join in reciting the first chapter of the Korán, "to the honour of God, his prophets, especially Mohammed, the saints, Mohammed's wives, disciples, and descendants, the martyrs, the Khaliphs, the founder of the order, &c." Prayers are then recited in chorus, and afterwards the dance begins. All quitting their places at the same time, range themselves on the left of their superior, and slowly advance towards him, with folded arms and downcast eyes. When the first of the Dervishes comes nearly opposite the president, he salutes, with a low bow, the tablet in the wall over his head, on which is engraved the name of the founder of the order; he then with two springs gets to the right side of the president, and having humbly saluted him, begins his dance. This consists in turning on the heel of the left foot, with closed eyes and extended arms, advancing slowly, and making as it were insensibly the round of the apartment. He is followed by

the second and third Dervishes; after which all begin spinning on the foot, and moving round, taking care to keep at such a distance that they may not interfere with each other's motions. This fatiguing process continues two hours, interrupted only by two brief pauses, during which the superior chants some short prayer. When the performance draws toward a close, the superior joins in the dance, and the whole concludes with a prayer for the royal family, the clergy, the members of the order, and the faithful throughout the world,

The exhibition of the *Rufalies* is still more extraordinary; it is divided into five acts; in the last of which, they lick red-hot swords, cut and wound themselves with knives, and lacerate their bodies until they sink exhausted. The superior, then going round, breathes upon the wounds, after which they are carefully dressed.

Most of the orders have convents; the married members are not permitted to bring their wives into the monastery, where they must sleep twice a week, but especially on the nights preceding their holy dances. Only one order, that of the *Bektashies*, can properly be called mendicant; many of these profess to live on alms alone, after the example of their founder. They are not very importunate beggars, rarely addressing themselves to particular individuals; they for the most part are found in crowded streets, shouting out, "Relief for the love of God." Others of this order become hermits, and profess to support themselves by manual labour.

The richer convents are always ready to give assistance to their poorer brethren, nor do they confine their relief to those of the same order; in this respect the monastic institutions of the Mohammedans are honourably distinguished from those in Roman Catholic countries, where the dis-

putes between rival orders have frequently disturbed the public tranquillity. No order is better endowed than that of the Mevlevies, but its members do not live the less abstemiously on that account; they use only the coarsest fare and the plainest raiment, and their superabundant revenues are fairly distributed to the poor. It is notorious, that in Spain the rich convents are guarded with the utmost care, and that it is scarcely possible to penetrate the secrets of the cloister, still circumstances occasionally transpire which prove that vows of abstinence are subjected to a very liberal interpretation. No instances have occurred of the Dervishes meddling in politics: it is scarcely necessary to add, that monks and friars are, at this present moment, the leaders of the apostolical party in Spain and Portugal. Though not bound by oaths or vows, it is rare to find a Dervish quit his order and return again into the world. All are at liberty to do so, but the habits of association are found to be as strong as the most solemn promises. Each regards it as a duty to die in the order which he has once joined. To the spirit of poverty and perseverance for which they are conspicuous, they add a remarkable humility and implicit submission to their superiors, and this not only within the walls of their convents, but in the streets and in society. Were the Dervishes of Turkey to lay aside their distinctive dress, they would still be recognised by their modest gait and submissive countenance.

The Dervishes are in general ready to admit strangers, and even Christians, to witness their religious dances. Some will even permit the uninitiated to join in these exercises; in the halls where the performances take place, two galleries are usually erected, one open, for men, the other fenced with gratings, for women. Most of the travellers who have visited these exhibitions have borne honourable

testimony to the kindness with which they were received, and the attention with which they were treated. It is no wonder that the monastic orders are very popular in Mohammedan countries; whenever a Dervish appears he is warmly welcomed. Many of the wealthy keep a Dervish in their house, like the confessor in rich Roman Catholic families; believing that his presence will bring upon them the blessing of heaven. As most of them pretend to a knowledge of charms, and the art of averting the influence of "the evil eye," most commanders of armies take with them a Dervish as their *Pír*, or religious adviser. Even the strong mind of Timúr was not free from this superstition, though it is rather singular that the person he chose as his Father-confessor, held also the situation of headgroom. As a specimen of the intelligence sometimes displayed by these *Pírs*, we shall extract two interpretations of dreams recorded by Timúr in his *Autobiography*.

"Another time when I had reflected on the past, I repented and was ashamed of many of my doings and sayings, and soon after dreamt that I was sitting in a desert, overgrown with thorns and thistles, and that I was surrounded by dogs, hogs, demons, men, and women with frightful and horrid countenances. I was so terrified by their appearance, that I awoke, and was so much impressed with the dream, that I wrote the circumstance to my *Pír*, and received from him the following answer: 'That which you saw in a dream was the representation of your vices and evil actions, such as tyranny, passion, lust, injuring the creatures of God, avarice, covetousness, envy, and pride, which are all of the worst quality; therefore change your habits, and you will receive the reward of good actions, and virtuous morals.' In consequence of this advice, from that time I refrained from injuring mankind, and from all enmity and strife."

“ Another time I dreamt, that I entered a garden filled with flowers and odoriferous herbs ; in it were also many fruit-trees, and running streams ; it was inhabited by beautiful young persons and charming songsters, also by handsome boys and girls, all of whom came and paid their respects to me. I was so much delighted with them, and pleased with my dream, that I again wrote all the particulars to my *Pír*, who wrote me in answer : ‘ Return thanks to God, for the Almighty has shown you the representation of your good actions and virtuous deeds, and know that the prophet (on whom be peace !) hath said, *Every man at his birth has two devils in attendance ; I also had them, but by the grace of God, I have subdued them* ; it is therefore incumbent on every man to imitate the conduct of the holy prophet, and endeavour to subdue his animal and brutal passions, and invest himself with good qualities, and praiseworthy morals, by which he may attain eternal felicity. Farewell.’ ”

The Kalenders are wandering Dervishes, who belong not to these orders ; their name signifies “ pure gold,” in allusion to the purification of their souls by severe penances. To this degraded class belong the spies, the assassins, and the plunderers, that we read of among the Dervishes ; and from them also numerous false prophets have sprung at different times. Their pretensions, however, are encouraged only by the very lowest ranks of society ; and they are not acknowledged as brethren by the members of the regular confraternities.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HISTORY OF MOHAMMEDANISM IN INDIA.

THOUGH the commercial establishments of the Saracens in the Indian Ocean, both diffused a knowledge of the Mohammedan religion along the coast of the Indian peninsula, and led to its partial adoption by some minor tribes, yet the creed of Islám never extended itself through the south of Hindústan, though it became triumphant in the northern provinces. Sultan Mahmúd, the first great monarch of the Ghizni dynasty, subdued the north-west of India, in the beginning of the eleventh century, destroyed the temples and idols, and erected mosques in the principal towns. The passive resistance of the Hindús proved, however, too strong for Mohammedan fanaticism; and when the first fury of the invasion was over, a tacit toleration was conceded to the Brahmins, which virtually amounted to full religious liberty. Nor was this state of things altered by the establishment of the Mongolian dynasty in the fourteenth century by the Emperor Baber; he respected the prejudices of his Brahminical subjects, and never interfered with their forms of worship. Where the Hindús had the supremacy, the Mohammedans enjoyed similar freedom; when the Portuguese, after discovering the passage round Cape, first reached the coast of Malabar, they found the Arabian traders not only tolerated, but possessing considerable political influence at the court of the Zamorin of Calicut. Their advice was asked when first the Christians appeared on the coast, and their suggestions inspired the suspicions to which the adventurers were exposed*.

* According to Camoens, they bribed the prime minister of the

The author of the *Tohfut-ul-Mujahideen**, having enumerated several commercial towns, either founded or enlarged by the Mohammedans, gives the following description of their political condition previous to the arrival of Vasco de Gama. "Now in all these towns the population

Zamorin, whom he calls the Regent, and also appealed to the monarch's gratitude, reciting all the services they had performed. The account is thus given in the *Lusiad*, book viii.

As checked by terror or impelled by hate,
Of various means they ponder and debate,
Against the Lusian train what arts employ,
By force to slaughter, or by fraud destroy ;
Now black, now pale, their bearded cheeks appear,
As boiling rage prevails, or boding fear ;
Beneath their shady brows their eye-balls roll,
Nor one soft gleam bespeaks the generous soul ;
Through quivering lips they draw their panting breath,
While their dark fraud decrees the work of death.

Lured was the regent with the Moorish gold,
And now agreed their fraudulent course to hold,
Swift to the king the regent's steps they tread,
The king they found o'erwhelmed in sacred dread ;
The word they take, their ancient deeds relate,
Their ever-faithful service of the state :
" For ages long, from shore to distant shore
For thee our ready keels the traffic bore ;
For thee we dared each horror of the wave,
Whate'er thy treasures boast our labour gave :
And wilt thou now confer our long-earned due,
Thy trade and favour, on a stranger crew ?"

MICKLE'S *Translation*.

Camoens, though a bitter enemy of the Saracens, does not deny that they had strong claims on the Zamorin's gratitude ; and the Portuguese historians confess, that it was owing to the aid of the Mohammedans, that Calicut became the chief city on the coast of Malabar.

* Translated by Lieutenant Rowlandson, and published by the Oriental Translation Committee, 1833.

became much increased, and the number of buildings enlarged, by means of the trade carried on by the Mohammedans, towards whom the chieftains of those places abstained from all oppression; and notwithstanding that these rulers and their troops were all Pagans, they paid much regard to their prejudices and customs, and avoided any act of aggression on the Mohammedans, except on some extraordinary provocation; this amicable footing being the more remarkable, from the circumstance of the Mohammedans not forming more than a tenth part of the population. . . The Mohammedans of Malabar not having any emir amongst them possessed of sufficient power and authority to govern them, are consequently under the rule of the Pagan chieftains, who faithfully guard their interests and decide between them, besides granting to them advantageous privileges; and should any geohammedan subject himself to the punishment of fine by them, notwithstanding his delinquency or any other provocation, their treatment to the faithful, as a body, continues kind and respectful, because to them they owe the increase of towns in their country, these having sprung up from the residence of the faithful amongst them If a Mohammedan shall have committed a crime worthy of death, and which by the laws of the inhabitants of the country is considered capital, having first obtained the assent of the principal Mohammedans, the Pagans put him to death, and after his execution deliver his body over to his brethren; who, having washed it and placed it in a coffin, offer up over it the prayer for the dead, and afterwards give it burial amongst the dead of their sect. . . . On the occasion of a Mohammedan being guilty of any crime, or of injuring the person of another feloniously, the chief of the Pagans calls upon his brethren to drive him out from amongst them, and to

degrade him, and bring him to punishment. Lastly, the Nairs do not molest their countrymen who have abjured idolatry and come over to the Mohammedan religion, nor endeavour to intimidate them, by threats, but treat them with the same consideration and respect they evince to the other Mohammedans, although the persons who have thus apostatized be of the lowest grade. In short, in consequence of the friendly treatment that they uniformly experienced from these people, the Mohammedan merchants in ancient times were induced to come amongst, and associate with them."

From the very first association of the Mohammedans with the Hindús, we see, consequently, that mutual tolerance was exercised, and that a religious harmony, highly honourable to both parties, subsisted. Nor were these relations changed by the Mongolian conquest; the descendants of Timur established their political supremacy over Northern India, but made no attempt to change the religion of the vanquished. It was natural, under such circumstances, that some mixture of the two creeds should occur, and accordingly we find Brahminical practices, and many of the prejudices of *caste* adopted by the conquerors at a very early period, while on the other hand, the Hindús learned to speak with respect of Mohammed and the prophets of Islám.

Nor was this the only instance of the abatement of fanaticism in the Mohammedans that settled in India; the Sonnites and Shiites laid aside their mutual animosities when they entered the peninsula; the partisans of Ali ceased to curse Omar, and the adherents of the four first Khaliphs forbore to ridicule the twelve Imáms. These circumstances seem to have induced the emperor Akbar, who ascended the throne A. D. 1556, to aim at the formation of a new religion, which might unite into one body

Mohammedans, Hindús, the followers of Zoroaster, and even Jews and Christians. Of the pure faith of Christianity, however, Akbar had no knowledge; Geronimo Xavier, a relation to the celebrated missionary, St. Francis Xavier, who was sent in the year 1602 to the Mogul court, presented the emperor with a translation of the Gospels into Persian, but he had mingled with them many of the popular Persian legends, trusting that they might thus be rendered more acceptable*. This impious artifice had an effect directly contrary to that which was designed; Akbar was disgusted by meeting with legends, of whose falsehood he had been previously convinced, and regarded Christianity with suspicion. Previous, however, to this time, he seems to have been well disposed to adopt the religion of the Gospels, in preference to that of the Korán. In the following letter, which Akbar addressed to the king of Portugal, a copy of which has been preserved by his vizier, the celebrated Abû'l Fazl †, it will be seen that he omits the complimentary mention of Mohammed, with which every true Mussulman commences his epistles. For the subjoined translation of this important document, we are indebted to Mr. James Fraser, author of the *History of Nadir Shah*.

“ A letter from the King of kings to the ruler of the Franks ‡. Glory inconceivable to God, the true king,

* Fraser's *History of Nadir Sháh*, pp. 12, 13.

† Author of the *Ayeen Akbery*.

‡ Fraser supposes that Akbar really imagined the king of Portugal to be the most powerful European monarch, on account of the extensive conquests that the Portuguese had made in India. But although Abulfeda, in his *Chronicles*, particularly distinguishes Richard Cœur de Lion as Al Inkitar, or the Englishman; yet the Mohammedans, even now, call all Europeans by the general name Al Afrani, or the Franks. In the *Tohfut-ul-Mughahideen*, the Portuguese are invariably called Franks; but of late years the Mussulmans of India have learned to distinguish Al Andaloos, “the

whose dominions are safe from the disaster of decay, and his realms secure from the calamity of change. The wonderful extent of the heavens and earth is but a minute part of the world of his creation, and infinite space but a small corner of his production. A governor, who has regulated the order of the universe, and the management of the sons of Adam, by the understanding of kings who exercise justice. A legislator, who by the ties of love and bonds of affection, has implanted in the various beings and several creatures the passion of inclination and union, and the affections of mutual tendency and society.

“And let praises unbounded be offered to the pure souls of the company of prophets* and apostles, who walked in the paths of truth, and gave directions, both general and particular, to lead us to the ways of righteousness.

“It is well known that, with those who have stored themselves with knowledge†, and studied Nature, nothing in this lower world, which is a minor of the spiritual one‡, is preferable to love, or more sacred than friendship. Therefore they ascribe the economy and right disposition of the world to affection and harmony. For whatever heart the Sun of Love shines on, it clears the whole soul from the darkness of mortality; and how much more is this requisite in princes, the good correspondence of whom is the cause of happiness to the world and the people therein.

Spaniard,” and Al Afransawi, “the Frenchman,” from Al Inkitar, “the Englishman.”

* It will be seen from this passage, that Akbar had totally forsaken Mohammedanism when this letter was written. No true Mussulman would write a letter, however short, without specially mentioning Mohammed, and reciting his praise.

† The expressions here used by the emperor are precisely those condemned by the stricter doctors of Islám, who look with great suspicion on scientific pursuits.

‡ This notion is borrowed from the Hindú philosophy.

For which reason it has been my earnest and entire endeavour to promote and confirm the ties of friendship and bonds of union amongst God's creatures, especially among the high rank of kings, whom God by his favour has particularly distinguished from the rest of mankind; and more especially his Royal Majesty*, who is endowed with intellectual knowledge, is the reviver of the ordinances of Jesus, and stands in no need of praise or description. Our neighbourhood†, with that renowned prince, making an alliance and friendship more indispensably necessary; and as a personal conference is impracticable, on account of several obstacles and many weighty reasons, the want thereof can only be supplied by embassies and a mutual correspondence. Since it is certain that these only can make up the loss of a personal conversation and interviews, we hope that they will be mutually carried on without interruption, that the affairs and desires of each may be manifested to the other.

“Your majesty knows that the learned and divines of all nations and times, in their opinions concerning the world of appearance and the intellectual‡, agree in this, that the

* Meaning the king of Portugal.

† The Portuguese conquests in India extended to the confines of the Mogul empire.

‡ These sentiments are derived from the Suféan philosophy, which is itself borrowed from that of the Indian sages. The Sufées believe that by continued abstraction from the things of time and sense, they can so purify the soul as to render it fit to be absorbed into Deity, and identified with the Godhead. Mirkhond ascribes a similar belief to Kai Khosrou, attributing to him the following verses :—

As long as thy love has not entirely divested me of egotism,
I cannot sit with thee according to my wishes, freed from self;
I am the thorn of my own way. Release me from myself,
That distinction of persons may be effaced, and thou and I blended
into one.

This doctrine is manifestly the same as the Nuwán of the Buddhists.

former ought to be no consideration in respect to the latter; yet the wise men of the times, and the great ones of all nations, toil much in perfecting themselves, as to this perishable and showy state, and consume the best of their lives, and the choicest of their time, in procuring apparent delights, being swallowed up and dissolved in fleeting pleasures and transitory joys. The most High God, merely through his eternal favour and perpetual grace, notwithstanding so many obstacles, and such a world of business and employment, has disposed my heart so as always to seek him; and though he has subjected the dominions of so many powerful princes to me, which to the best of my judgment I endeavour to manage and govern, so as that all my subjects are contented and happy; yet, praise be to God, his will and my duty to him is the end I propose in all my actions and desires. And as most people, being enchained by the bonds of constraint and fashion, and regarding the customs of their ancestors, relations, and acquaintances, without examining the arguments or reasons for it, give an implicit faith to that religion in which they have been brought up, and remain deprived of the excellency of the truth, the finding of which is the proper end of reason; therefore at times I converse with the learned of all religions*, and

* Fraser had copies of letters from Abdallah Khán, prince of Tartary, severely reprobating Akbar for his intercourse with the Brahmins, and his indifference to the Mohammedan faith. Jahan-gueir (the son of Akbar), in his curious autobiography, published by the Oriental Translation Committee, declares that he remonstrated with his father on account of his tolerant, or rather latitudinarian principles. Akbar's noble reply deserves to be preserved: "My dear child," said he, "I find myself a puissant monarch, the shadow of God upon earth. I have seen that he bestows the blessings of his gracious providence upon all his creatures, without distinction. If should I discharge the duties of my exalted station, were I to withhold my compassion and indulgence from any of those intrusted to

profit by the discourses of each. As the veil of a language interposes betwixt us, it would be expedient, you would oblige me with such a person as could distinctly relate and explain the above affair. It has also reached my fortunate ears, that the heavenly books, such as the Pentateuch, Psalms, and Gospels, are put into Arabic and Persic; should there be a possibility of procuring, in your country, a translation of these, or of any other books that might be of general benefit, let them be sent. For a further confirmation of our friendship, and securing the foundation of affection and unity, I have sent my trusty friend, the learned and honourable Seïd Mazuffer, whom I have particularly favoured and distinguished; he will communicate several things to you personally, in which confide. Always keep open the doors of correspondence and embassy; and peace to him who follows the guide! Written in the month Ribbi-al-aval, 990, (April, 1582*)."

This valuable document sufficiently refutes those, who

my charge. With all of the human race, with all of God's creatures, I am at peace. Why then should I permit myself, under any consideration, to be the cause of molestation or aggression to any one? Besides, are not five parts in six of mankind, either Hindús or aliens to the faith? and were I to be governed by the motives you suggest, what alternative can I have but to put them all to death? I have thought it therefore my wisest plan to let these men alone. Neither is it to be forgotten, that the class of which we are speaking, in common with the other inhabitants of Agra, are usefully employed, either in the pursuits of science, or the arts, or of improvements for the benefit of mankind, and have in numerous instances arrived at the highest distinctions in the state, there being indeed to be found in this city men of every description, and of every religion on the face of the earth."—*Memoirs of Jahangueir*, p. 15.

Jahangueir did not follow his father's example, but became a bitter persecutor.

* We have been unable to discover whether this letter ever reached its destination.

attribute the religious innovations of Akbar to folly, caprice, or the paltry vanity of being honoured as the founder of a sect. His language is that of a man possessing a strong clear understanding, deeply impressed with the importance of the subject into which he was inquiring, and sincerely anxious to obtain authentic information. That he did not embrace Christianity is unfortunately true, but the result would probably have been different, had he seen the Gospels in their original purity, and had a Schwartz been his instructor instead of a Xavier.

Akbar, like many others, tried to make an eclectic religion, a philosophic creed, which, like that proposed by the emperor Julian*, should comprehend every sect and denomination. Such an attempt is more foolish than wicked, for it is rendered innocuous by its utter absurdity. A philosophic creed full of ideal abstractions, may possibly charm the imagination, but it is cold and passionless, it "plays round the head but comes not near the heart," and it leaves unsatisfied all the desires and cravings of our nature. When Paganism was on the decline, its priests did not persecute the philosophers, because they knew that mere speculations would never satisfy the multitude, but they directed all their wrath against Christianity, for its fundamental truth was practical and tangible, "God *manifest in the flesh*."

That two such religions as the Mohammedan and Brahminical should have existed together for six centuries, without producing civil commotions, is a fact not paralleled in the history of the world. It is not surprising that under such circumstances the exclusive bigotry taught by the Korán gradually faded, until the duty of propagating religion by the sword became one of those phrases which men

* See the recent edition of Libanius.

repeat without attaching meaning to their words. Still less wonderful is it, that the contemplation of such opposite systems led Akbar to doubt the truth of both, and to look for one of purer sentiments and clearer evidence. Like most Mohammedan reformers, the emperor especially insisted on the great doctrine of the Divine Unity, which he declared was but obscurely revealed to the prophets; but, unlike every other propagator of a new faith, his proceedings were regulated by the utmost caution, and his appeals made solely to the reason. The opportunity which he embraced to declare his sentiments, is singularly characteristic of his prudence. In the year 1575, a dispute arose as to the number of wives that a Moslem might legally marry. The Korán says, "two, or three, or four," but the conjunction (*vau*) may also be translated *and*, in which case the prophet would have permitted nine wives to his followers. From this difficulty arose several others connected with the question of marriage, the most indeterminate in the whole range of Mohammedan law; tradition was found to contradict tradition, Imám was quoted against Imám, and commentator against commentator, until the laws on the subject were proved to be a mass of confusion and uncertainty. Upon this the emperor gave the first hint of his scepticism, averring that no divine system could display such manifest contradictions; henceforward he professed himself a searcher after truth, and openly entered into familiar conferences with the teachers of every religion. An Eastern writer, in mentioning these conferences, hints at the dangers that result from too daring a spirit of inquiry, and gives a warning to many of our own age and country, who are too ready to discuss doctrines as if they were mere theoretic opinions, and not fraught with the most important consequences. He says, "the emperor frequently

passed his time, particularly on Friday nights, in company with learned men, in ascertaining the truth of their respective sects and religions ; when they so closely engaged in dispute, that they at last convicted each other of infidelity, and produced such confusion in religion, that no one knew what to believe." The purport, and very probably the exact words, of many of these disputations are preserved in that very extraordinary work, the *Dabistan*; a work of the utmost value to all that desire to become acquainted with the religious philosophy of Central and Western Asia.

In one of these conversations, a philosopher, apparently designed to represent Akbar himself, is introduced in company with a Jew, a Christian, a Brahmin, and a Moslem; he confutes them all in succession, and then details the articles of his own creed. The declaration would be merely a matter of curiosity were it a representation of Akbar's sentiments only, but it is fundamentally the same as the creed of the Sikhs, a new people, whose rapid advance under Runjeet Sing, has recently assumed an important and perhaps a formidable aspect, and it contains the germs of that philosophic infidelity, which is unfortunately becoming prevalent among the educated classes of the Brahmins and Mussulmans.

All being silent, the philosopher thus addressed the assembly: "Know for certain, that the accomplished apostle and perfect messenger from God is the illustrious Akbar; that is the imperial wisdom, on whom be the blessings of God! Nor can you require a stronger proof than this, his being from his own essence skilled in all knowledge, and that his precepts are such as are intelligible to the understandings of all men. And since reason proves that a wise and almighty Creator has formed this world, and has showered many blessings on the inhabitants of this

temporary abode, which are deserving of praise and thanksgiving, let us, as far as the light of our understandings will enable us, meditate on the mysteries of his creation, and render praises unto him according to the extent of our knowledge of his sublime perfections. Then when we have obtained such knowledge, and have been led into the right path, should we deny his unity and become unmindful of his benefits, shall we not deservedly incur punishment? Since such is the case, why should we pay obedience to any man, who was a mortal like ourselves, and was subject to anger, and lust, and covetousness, and pain, and joy, and love of rank and power, even more than ourselves. For if this mortal should teach knowledge and thanksgiving, we have been already made acquainted with these by the assistance of our own understandings; and if he should teach what is contrary to reason, this would alone be a sufficient proof of his falsehood. For reason assures us, that the Creator of this world is wise, and a wise being would not prescribe to the created any worship which would appear to their reasons to be evil, since what appears evil cannot remain permanent. Now, all religions are founded on circumstances which must be considered as evil, such as believing in the conversations of God, the incarnation of the incorporeal essence in a human form, and his reascension into heaven in a human body; the ascension of men into heaven; the pilgrimage to particular edifices, and the ceremonies attending it; the throwing of stones, and running between two hills, and kissing the black stone. For if it be said, that it is impossible to adore God without some visible medium, and that it is therefore necessary to have some fixed point to which the mind can attach itself, it is evident that, for remembering and praising God, no medium nor particular place is at all requisite. But if they

should be admitted to be necessary, the sun and the planets deserve the preference. Yet neither can be considered as exempt from a resemblance to Paganism, though the devout respect paid to particular edifices is most objectionable, as their being called the house of God may induce the ignorant to ascribe a corporeal form to God; and as also different prophets have conferred a sanctity on different places, such as the Kaaba and Jerusalem. Since therefore a resemblance to Paganism exists in all worship of stone, earth, and corporeal forms, the most proper objects on which to fix the mind are fire, water, and the planets. If then any object be necessary, let it be the sun and the planets." He continues in the same strain to argue on the inconsistencies and defects in different systems of faith, displaying, through his entire argument, great ingenuity, no ordinary share of common sense, a thorough knowledge of the weak points in the Mohammedan system, but also the most glaring misconceptions of Christianity, which would deserve to be called surprising, did we not know that Geronimo Xavier had been his instructor in the Christian system.

Akbar selected as the test of his religion, the consonance of his doctrines with reason, a phrase plausible in sound, but which may mean anything or nothing, just as the propounder pleases to interpret it. An ordinance to which the seals of most of the theologians, doctors of the law, and learned men throughout the empire were appended, appeared, in which it was declared that the interests of religion required that the emperor should be declared sole protector of the faith. Several Momammedans and Hindús at once declared their readiness to embrace the imperial creed; and Akbar, encouraged by this success, ordered the old confession of faith, "God is God, and Mohammed is

his prophet," to be discontinued, and that in its stead the following formula should be used, "there is no God but God, and Akbar is the vicar of God."

As the religion which Akbar wished to introduce was nearly a pure Deism, he abolished rather than instituted forms and rites. Thus he "abrogated the five daily prayers, ablution, fasts, alms, and pilgrimage, as performed by the Mohammedans, the assembly for worship on Fridays, and the Muezzins or criers of the mosques; he ordered to be considered as clean, what was unclean by the Moslem law; he permitted the sale of wine and games of chance; and he forbade the marriage of more than one wife, and the circumcision of boys until they were twelve years of age, when the ceremony was to be left entirely optional*." He even attempted to efface the memory of the ancient religion, by ordering the era of his accession to be used instead of the Hegira. The Shiites were at first disposed to favour these innovations, because they afforded them a triumph over the Sonnites. They readily joined the emperor in denouncing the absurdities and contradictions in the various collections of traditions, and liberally bestowed invective on the companions of the prophets; but in the ardour of controversy they forgot the dictates of prudence, and saw too late that they had shaken the foundations of their own creed, whilst striving to subvert that of their adversaries. This, indeed, is not the only instance in which imprudent controversialists have supplied weapons to the infidel.

Akbar proceeded much more slowly with the Hindús, for he probably dreaded to encounter their obstinacy in adhering to ancient institutions. He issued no edict against idolatry, a fact not very consistent with his pre-

* *Bombay Transactions*, vol. ii. p. 266.

tended zeal for maintaining in its purity the doctrine of the divine unity; he, however, ordered trials by ordeal to be discontinued, and forbade the burning of widows at the funeral pile of their husbands, but the latter edict he was subsequently compelled to revoke. It is well known that, notwithstanding their gross idolatry, the Brahmins profess to believe in one Supreme God; this doctrine they put prominently forward when their system is attacked by Christian or Mohammedan missionaries, and of course they insisted strongly upon it in all their conversations with the emperor; at least they do so in all the conferences recorded in the Dabistan. This encouraged the emperor to persevere, but we do not find among his converts a single Hindú of high caste.

Philosophic deism can never be a popular, and still less a national creed; it is utterly at variance with the laws of human nature; its existence is ideal and shadowy, it affords grounds for no hopes, room for no gratitude, exercise for no desire, object for no love. Forms of devotion may indeed be mistaken for the substance, but without the forms, devotion itself must wither and fade, and man remain alone in the world, without confidence for the present, and without hope for the future. Akbar soon discovered that a ritual was necessary for his new religion, and after much reflection he resolved to take his forms and ceremonies from the creed of Zoroaster. It is unnecessary to repeat minutely the different institutions he recommended, but the chief was reverence for the sun and the planets, as the most glorious symbols of Deity.

One of his institutions would to most Europeans appear of very trifling importance, and yet it seems to have been the rock on which his whole plan was finally shipwrecked. He forbade his subjects to wear beards, and thus gave more

offence than by all his abuse of Mohammed, and ridicule of the incarnations of Brahma. The rest of his reign was spent in an idle contest with his subjects ; the new religion only spread where the court had influence, and when Akbar's son Jehangueir ascended the throne, Islamism was restored without a struggle.

But though Akbar's innovations failed to obtain a public and permanent establishment, we must not conclude that their influence has been destroyed. His creed indeed nearly resembles that of the Mohammedan Sofies, who reject the Korán and deny the divine mission of Mohammed; and that of the Hindús of the Vedanti school, who are in fact complete sceptics. Since his reign Islamism in India, as we shall soon see, has been greatly adulterated by the introduction of Brahminical doctrines and ceremonies ; and we cannot doubt but that much of the success of the Sikh creed, must be attributed to the labours of the emperor.

Considerable interest has been excited by the rapid progress of the Sikh power, under the late able monarch Runjeet Sing, the ruler of the Sikhs. It is, however, necessary to remark that the Sikhs must be regarded politically as a Hindú sect, though their religion, like that of Akbar, is founded on a mixture of Brahminism and Mohammedanism. The following brief description of the sect and its founder, extracted from the *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin**, will show how essentially it differs from any sect that has sprung up within the bosom of Brahminism. " These people (the Sikhs), from their birth, or from the moment of their admission, if they enter as proselytes, never cut or shave their beards and whiskers, or any hair whatever of their body. They form a particular society, which distin-

* Published by the Oriental Translation Committee, vol. i. p. 109.

guishes itself by wearing blue garments, and going armed at all times. When a person is once admitted into their fraternity, they make no scruple of associating with him, of whatever tribe, clan, or race he may have hitherto been, nor do they betray any of those scruples and prejudices so deeply rooted in the Hindú mind. This sect or fraternity, which first became powerful about the latter end of Aurenzib's reign, has for its chief Gurú Govind, one of the successors of Nanac Gorú, the founder of the sect. Nanac was the son of a grain-merchant of the Katri tribe, who in his youth was as remarkable for his good qualities, as for the beauty of his person and for his talents. Nor was he destitute of fortune. There was then in those parts a dervish of note, called Seïd Hossein, a man of eloquence as well as wealth, who having no children of his own, and being struck with the beauty of the young Nanac, conceived a great regard for him, and charged himself with his education. As the young man was early introduced to the knowledge of the most esteemed writings of Islám, and initiated into the principles of our most approved doctrines, he advanced so much in learning, and became so fond of his studies, that he made it a practice in his leisure hours to translate literally, and make notes and extracts of our moral maxims. Those which made the deepest impression upon him were written in the dialect of the Punjab, his maternal language. At length he connected them into order, and put them into verse. By this time he had so far shaken off those prejudices of Hindúism, which he had imbibed with his milk, that he became quite another man. His collection becoming extensive it took the form of a book, which he entitled Guant, and he became famous in the time of the emperor Baber (the grandfather of Akbar), from which time he was followed by multitudes of converts.

This book is to this day held in so great veneration and esteem among the Sikhs, that they never touch or read it without assuming a respectful posture, and, in reality, it is a compound of what Nanac has found most valuable in those books which he had been perusing."

This passage, from an author deservedly called the Mohammedan Burnet, clearly shows that Nanac derived his religious principles from some of the Mohammedan sects. Mr. Horace Hayman Wilson, professor of Sanscrit in the University of Oxford, has shown that Kahir, a celebrated saint among the Mussulmans, though of Hindú descent, was the author from whom Nanac borrowed most largely his Unitarian doctrines. Kahir was equally venerated by the Hindús and Mussulmans; after his death a contest arose for his body, the former wishing to burn, the latter to bury it; "during this dispute," say the legends, "his body disappeared."

We have frequently mentioned that the principles of the Mohammedan Sufies, and of the Hindús of the Vedanti school, are those usually called philosophical deism. Kahir, if we may judge from some specimens of his poetry, was a decided Sufi, and taught the indifference of forms of worship. Nanac himself practically conformed to the habits of the Mohammedan fakirs, though some of the austerities to which he subjected himself belong rather to the ancient religions of India. Though he devotes most of his writings to the praise of the one true God, he speaks of the Hindú polytheism with respect, and even with reverence; he entreats the Mohammedans to abstain from the slaughter of cows, so offensive to Brahminical prejudices; and he forbade the Hindús to eat swine's flesh, the abomination of every Moslem. When the partisans of both religions disputed before him, on the excellence of

their respective systems of faith, he said, "Without the practice of true piety both religions are wrong, and if rectitude be wanting, neither Hindú nor Moslem will be acceptable before the throne of God; for the faded tinge of scarlet that has been soiled by water will never return. You both deceive yourselves, pronouncing aloud Ram (a Hindú name of God), and Rahim (a Mohammedan epithet of Deity, signifying *the Merciful*), and the way of Satan prevails in the universe."

On every occasion Nanac showed great courage in the maintenance of his opinions. He was once insulted and beaten by a bigoted Mollah, for lying on the ground with his feet turned towards the Kebab, or direction in which the sacred temple of Mecca is supposed to stand. "Dost thou dare, wicked infidel," exclaimed the irritated priest of Islám, "to turn thy unclean feet towards the holy temple of God?"—"Turn them, if it be in your power," replied Nanac, "in a direction where the temple of God is not."

Of Mohammed, Nanac gave the following character. "That prophet was sent by God to this world, to do good, and to disseminate the knowledge of the one God through means of the Korán; but he acting on the principles of free-will, which all human beings exercise, introduced oppression and cruelty, and the slaughter of cows, for which he died." It is singular to find the founder of the Sikhs adhering so fondly to the Hindú reverence for the cow, at the moment that he was casting off the essential doctrines of the Brahminical faith; but such conduct is not without a parallel: the writer of this work is acquainted with a Turkish gentleman, converted to Christianity many years ago, who has not even yet been able to overcome his antipathy to swine's flesh. Of himself Nanac said, "I am now sent from heaven to publish unto mankind a book,

which shall reduce all the names given to God, to one name, which is GOD, and he who calls him by any other name shall fall into the path of the devil, and have his feet bound in the chains of wretchedness ; you have," said he to the Mohammedans, "despoiled the temples, and burned the sacred Védas of the Hindús, and you have dressed yourselves in dresses of blue, and you delight to have your praises sung from house to house ; but I, who have seen all the world, tell you, that the Hindús equally hate you and your mosques. I am sent to reconcile your jarring faiths, and I implore you to read their scriptures as well as your own ; but reading is useless without obedience to the doctrine taught ; for God has said, no man shall be saved except he has performed good works. The Almighty will not ask to what tribe or persuasion he belongs. He will only ask what he has done. Therefore those violent and continued disputes, which subsist between the Hindús and Mussulmans, are as impious as they are unjust. Hundreds of thousands of prophets stand at the gates of the Most High. These all perish, God alone is immortal. Yet men who unite in the praise of God, are not ashamed of living in contention with each other, which proves that the evil spirit has subdued all. He alone is a true Hindú whose heart is just, and he only is a good Mohammedan whose life is pure."

Nanac founded a sect rather than a religion ; many of his principles resembled those of the people called Quakers, especially his prohibition of oaths, and of war. "Put on armour," said he, "that will harm no one ; let thy coat of mail be that of understanding, and convert thy enemies to friends. Fight with valour, but use no weapon except the word of God." These instructions so nearly correspond with those of the emperor Akbar, that we may easily believe

the progress of the Sikh doctrines to have been encouraged during his reign. But when Jehangueir revived the intolerance of Islámism in the Mogul dominions, the Sikhs were persecuted as a heretical sect, and in the year 1606, (the first of Jehangueir's reign,) the Mohammedans of the Punjáb procured the imprisonment of Arjún-mal, the fourth successor of Nanac in the presidency of the Sikhs. Arjún died from the severity of the treatment he had received, and this was regarded by his followers as an atrocious murder committed by the Mohammedan government. The Sikhs chose for their new sovereign Har Góvind, and he commenced his rule by the important declaration, that it was permitted to his followers to use arms in their own defence. In consequence of this permission, the Sikhs were changed from a peaceable inoffensive sect, into a race of formidable warriors, eager for revenge, and inspired with a fierce hatred against the followers of Mohammed. It is said that Har Góvind wore two swords at his girdle; and being asked the reason, this Gúrú or military priest answered, "One is to revenge the murder of my father, the other to exterminate the followers of Mohammed."

During the reign of Aurengzib, the glory of the Mogul dynasty was at its zenith; the Mohammedan faith was everywhere triumphant, the Sikhs had never acquired any real strength, and they were greatly distracted by dissensions among themselves. But after the death of Aurengzib, another Góvind, who had also a father's martyrdom to revenge, became their spiritual leader or Gúrú, and commenced a moral revolution, the greatest that ever has been attempted in India. Nanac had abstained from all interference with the civil institutions of the Hindús, but Gúrú Góvind boldly attacked the whole frame-work of Hindú

society by the abolition of caste. He declared that all who entered his sect were on a level, and that "the Brahmin who adopted his tenets had no higher claim to eminence than the lowest Sudra who swept his house." The paths of wealth and glory were thus opened to all who joined his standard, and the inferior tribes, excluded for ages from all the roads of honourable ambition by the tyranny of caste, readily joined the daring innovator, who promised to abolish their degrading thralldom. The Mohammedans at once saw that the foundation of their empire was shaken; the law that excluded the greater part of the population of India from the use of arms, rendered the conquerors secure from the dangers of a general insurrection; but it was clear, that if Góvind's innovations were adopted, the Mohammedans might be driven beyond the Indus by the mere force of numbers. It was resolved to wage immediate war against the propounder of such dangerous doctrines, and the contest was carried on with equal cruelty on both sides. "Gúrú Góvind," says the Siyar-ul-Mutakherin, "having succeeded to his father, re-organized his numerous bands into companies or troops, which he put under the command of his most faithful disciples, to whom he gave orders to provide themselves with arms and horses. As soon as he saw them accoutred and mounted, he commenced plundering the country and raising contributions. This conduct did not long go unpunished, the military commanders of the provinces uniting, fell upon the free-booters, and dispersed them; and Gúrú Góvind's two sons having fallen alive into their hands were put to death. The father's situation was now become nearly as dangerous: hunted down like a wild beast, he retired to a strong-hold; but he was precluded from escaping to his family and country beyond Serhind, the intermediate space being full of troops. In this critical

situation he applied to the Afghans beyond Serhind, and promised them a large sum of money if they would conduct him to a place of safety. A number of these people accepted the proposal, and coming down from their mountains, recommended him to let his beard and whiskers, and the hair of every other part of his body, grow; and then clothing him in a short blue tunic, like that worn by themselves, brought him out of his retreat, and carried him through the whole country in perfect safety. Whenever any one inquired who he was, they answered that he was one of their holy men of the town of Oucha. Gúrú Góvind having been so lucky as to extricate himself out of this difficulty, retained the Afghan garb in memory of that event, and he thenceforward made it the distinctive dress of his followers. No one was from that time received as a proselyte, unless his beard and hair were long, and unless he adopted the garb of the proper pattern. The loss of his children so deeply affected Gúrú Góvind, that he died of grief."

Benda, the successor of Góvind, for some time maintained the fortunes of the sect against an amazing disparity of force, but he was at length defeated, made prisoner, and put to death by torture. The Mohammedans made a cruel use of their victory; orders were issued for the execution, without trial, of all who followed the doctrines of Nanac, immense multitudes were slain, and the remnant of the Sikhs sought refuge in the mountains. In the decline of the Mongolian empire, about the middle of the last century, they recovered their strength, and became masters of the Punjáb. During the Mahratta war, at the beginning of the present century, their intestine divisions rendered them weak and powerless; but since their recent union, under Runjeet Sing, they have become the most formidable power in south-western Asia.

Thus we see that two attempts have been made in India, to form a new religion from the discordant creeds of Brāhma and Mohammed, that of Akbar by a Mohammedan, that of Nanac by a Hindú. Neither effort could have been made if there were not some elements of approximation discoverable in the two religions, and those we believe to be very striking. In tracing the history of the formation of the Mohammedan faith, we have shown that it borrowed many doctrines and practices from the religion of the ancient Persians, and we have established, at least a probability, that Zerdusht or Zoroaster derived no small portion of his creed from Indian sources. The establishment of the Shiah sect in middle Asia, was followed by the introduction of many of the old Magian superstitions into the creed of Islām, so that when Mahmoud of Ghizni introduced Mohammedanism into India, he brought thither a religion which had many principles in common with the native faith of Hindústan. It is no slight confirmation of these opinions; to find the emperor Akbar taking the religion of the ancient Persians as the middle ground on which he might expect to unite his Hindú and Moslem subjects.

The success of the Sikh creed gives rise to other and different speculations; had Runjeet been an enthusiast instead of a politician, he might have changed the fate of India once more. The history of his sect proves that a mixture of Mohammedans and Hindús is not quite so hopeless an undertaking as it is generally believed to be; that the chains of caste may be broken by some daring innovator, and that the Hindús, a race generally so submissive and tractable, may, under the influence of religious enthusiasm, become as furious and as formidable as the warriors of the Scythian deserts.

But it must not be imagined, that these are the only examples of a mixture between the Mohammedan and Brahminical religions in India. Hindú corruptions have penetrated the whole creed of Islám in that country; usages inconsistent with the spirit of the Korán, and some contrary to its literal precepts, have been adopted; personages who were not even Mussulmans have been elevated to the rank of saints, and semi-pagan festivals instituted to commemorate them. The festivals observed by the India Mohammedans have been recently described by Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali, an English lady who had married a Moslem, and also in the *Qanoon-e-Islám*, a treatise on Indian Mohammedanism, written by a native, and translated by Dr. Herklots. To these works we refer our readers; they will find, especially in the latter, full proof that the Mohammedans of India have substituted the idolatrous worship of saints, with but little change, for the idolatrous worship of the Hindú subordinate deities.

CHAPTER XV.

THE EFFECT OF THE MOHAMMEDAN RELIGION ON
SCIENCE, LITERATURE, AND CIVILIZATION.

WAR is deservedly esteemed a scourge of the human race, but war is not always an unmixed evil, like the tempests that sweep over the sky, armies not unfrequently clear away all that was stagnant and noxious, and open room for the growth of that which will be vigorous and wholesome. In the early part of this volume we described the degraded condition of the human intellect both in Europe and Asia, when first Mohammed appeared as a prophet; barbaric pride and pontific luxury oppressed the West; effeminacy, meanness, and treachery ruled in the East; Rome and Constantinople seemed equally incapable of reformation, and it required a violent exertion to break the fetters which indolence, superstition, and fraud had combined to impose upon mankind. We regard the rapid career and wondrous victories of the Saracens as among the causes of the existing European civilization, and we shall therefore cast a hasty glance at their progress.

We have already seen how favourable the condition of Arabia was to the formation of a bold and hardy race of warriors, full of a chivalrous spirit, reckless of life, ardent for fame, eager to place their feet on the necks of prostrate nations; on the other hand, we beheld the Byzantine empire distracted by faction, dishonoured by profligate intrigue, and demoralized by the unblushing exhibition of unmanly vices in the rulers, both of church and state. A

similar picture was exhibited in Persia, for it seemed as if the glorious reign of Nushirvan was

Like the last flashes, fierce and few,
Seen from some noble pile on fire.

It appears from this simple statement, that from the very commencement of the contest between the young power of the Saracens, and the decayed governments of Constantinople and Ctesiphon, the issue could not be doubtful; but this consideration by no means diminishes our astonishment at the extent and rapidity of the Saracenic conquests. Within a century they had extended their sway in Asia from the Mediterranean to the frontiers of China; while towards the West, Northern Africa was theirs from the Nile to the Atlantic; Spain lay prostrate, several provinces of France were subdued, and the project of the Saracenic general Músa, to march from the Pyrenees to the Bosphorus, for the purpose of joining in the siege of Constantinople, seemed not only feasible, but would probably have been accomplished, had not death cut short his career.

Still more wonderful were the naval triumphs of this extraordinary people; in the days of Mohammed, so dreaded was the sea by the Arabs, that he declared its intervention would be a valid excuse for not performing the pilgrimage to Mecca; a generation had not passed away when their flag floated triumphant in the Mediterranean, Crete was taken, and the islands in the south of the Archipelago shared its fate; Sicily fell a prey to the Mohammedans of Northern Africa, and they also obtained permanent establishments in Corsica, Sardinia, and the South of Italy.

There was necessarily much suffering inflicted, but there was also much evil removed. The Saracens were more generous enemies, and more lenient rulers than the Greeks

and the Persians. The provincials of Northern Africa, crushed and degraded by the galling tyranny of the Byzantine court, hailed the Saracens as liberators; and even the Spaniards found the Moorish yoke more tolerable than that of their Gothic sovereigns. "The strong," says an old writer, "can afford to be generous, the weak ever seek protection in cruelty, and hence has arisen the common remark, that there is no tyranny like the tyranny of fear."

Though a nomade race in their own country, the Saracens, ere the second century of their power, had become the best agriculturists, and the most enterprising merchants of the period. They founded new cities as commercial marts on all the great highways of trade through their extensive dominions, and the wisdom that dictated their choice was proved by the rapidity with which these cities attained wealth and eminence. To facilitate the cultivation of the fields, canals were cut, whose stupendous remains at this day excite admiration. It is true that all these improvements have been swept away by "the changes of realm and the chances of time," but especially by the substitution of Turkish for Saracenic dominion; still we must remember "such things were," and consider how beneficial was their example.

In estimating the effect of the Saracenic wars on European civilization, we must not omit to mention the Crusades. It is true, that during these wars, the Christians fought not against the Saracens, but against the conquerors of the Saracens, the Turks and Tartars. Still it is scarcely possible to read the history of the period without perceiving that the Crusades were, in fact, the reaction produced by the Saracenic conquests; at least, that they effected what such conquests rendered necessary, the erection of a barrier

against the further progress of Islamism. It may be said, that if this were the case, the result should have been earlier produced, and the European movement should be found nearer to the time when the Khaliphs were the most potent monarchs of the world. To this objection the answer is easy; the effect was produced individually, for many volunteers joined the French and Spanish armies that warred against the Moors; but it was not produced nationally, for the swarms had not yet ceased to issue from the wilds of Scandinavia, that kept Western Europe in constant dread of a more imminent and more formidable danger than was threatened by the progress of the Saracens. Besides, after the first great burst, the Saracens settled down into luxurious tranquillity, and sought no new acquisitions. Finally, it was not until the Turkish age that Christendom acquired that centralization of feeling necessary for a united effort; that spirit of religious enthusiasm which simultaneously inspired every nation, however different in language or opposed in interests. Just as Mohammed had made Islamism a bond of union between the hostile tribes of Arabia, did the Popes make their creed the chain that bound Christendom into one body. It would be very strange if, during the long period of its existence, the Papacy had never been found to work some good, and it certainly deserves to be set down to its credit, that it checked the torrent of Turkish invasion, at the precise moment when that invasion was most likely to effect its greatest evils.

The causes and consequences of the crusades have been the theme of lengthened controversy; it seems probable that they ought not to be ascribed to any single cause. The barons and knights may have fought to recover the crownlands of their lord, and regarded the recovery of Palestine

as a feudal service; the meaner volunteers may have been actuated by simple fanaticism; countless adventurers may have been actuated by mere love of enterprise, a desire for plunder, or a vague hope of improving their fortunes, but the great object of Gregory VII. was to secure Christendom from the ruin by which it was threatened. It was by Gregory, beyond all controversy, that these wars were projected, though the movement was commenced by his successor, Urban V.

The beneficial consequences of the crusades have been sometimes denied, rarely indeed of late years, but the impugnors of these wars include names that must not be lightly passed over, since those of Gibbon and Robertson are among the number. This is not the place to enter into the controversy; but we must mention one result from them, which has never been controverted. It was during the later crusades that a spirit of humanity was first introduced into war, and lenity to the captive, and the fallen, ranked in the number of military virtues.

It has been commonly supposed that the government of the Khaliphs was an absolute despotism; no supposition can be more erroneous, there never was a more perfect democracy than that which existed under the four first successors of Mohammed. The monarch was elective, his power was limited, not only by the laws of the Koran, but by the unwritten traditions of the prophet; public opinion controlled every important action, and the meanest soldier possessed a liberty of remonstrance, which would scarcely have been permitted even in a republican army. Time wrought a change in this system, the transference of empire from the Saracens to the Turks completed its overthrow. But even at this moment, the Mussulman sovereigns, universally regarded as autocrats, dare not openly violate any of the

ordinances prescribed by their religion. The doctors of law, who unite the professions of theology and jurisprudence, constitute a power in the state, ready at every moment to encounter the monarch that would venture to violate the Korán or the traditions. Evliya Effendi, whose *Travels* have been just published by the Oriental Translation Committee, relates a curious anecdote which illustrates the power possessed by these clerical lawyers over the Turkish sultan.

“Mohammed II. being a very passionate monarch, severely rebuked his architect for not having built his mosque of the same height as Aya Sofiyah (Saint Sophia); and for having cut down the columns, which were each worth the whole tribute of Rúm (Asia Minor). The architect excused himself by saying, that he had reduced the two columns three cubits each, in order to give his building more security and strength against the earthquakes so common in Istámbol (Constantinople); and had thus made the mosque lower than Aya Sofiyah. The emperor, not satisfied with this excuse, ordered the architect's hands to be cut off, which was done accordingly. On the following day the architect appeared with his family before the tribunal of the Kazi (civil and ecclesiastical judge), styled Istambol Mollasi (Constantinopolitan judgment-seat), to lay his complaint against the emperor, and appeal to the sentence of the law. The judge immediately sent his officer to cite the emperor to appear in court. The imperial conqueror, on hearing this summons, said, ‘The command of the Prophet's Law must be obeyed!’ and putting on his mantle, and thrusting a mace into his belt, went into the court of law. After having given the Salem Aleik (customary greeting) he was about to seat himself in the highest place, when the Kazi said, ‘Sit not down, O

prince ! but stand on thine feet together with thine adversary, who has made an appeal to the law.' The architect then made his complaint : ' My lord, I am a perfect master-builder, and a skilful mathematician ; but this man, because I made his mosque low, and cut down two of his columns, has mutilated me of both hands, which has ruined me, and deprived me of the means of supporting my family : it is thy part to pronounce the sentence of the noble law.' The judge upon this addressed the emperor, ' What sayest thou, prince, hast thou caused this man's hands to be cut off innocently ? ' The emperor immediately replied ; ' By heaven, my lord ! this man lowered my mosque ; and for having diminished two columns of mine, each worth the produce of Misr (Egypt), thus robbing my mosque of all renown by making it so low, I did cut off his hands : it is for thee to pronounce the sentence of the noble law.' The Kazi answered, ' Prince, renown is a misfortune. If a mosque be upon a plain, and low and open, worship in it is not thereby prevented. If each column had been a precious stone, its value would have been only that of a stone ; but the hands of this man, which have enabled him for these forty years to subsist by his skilful workmanship, you have illegally cut off. He can henceforth do no more than attend to his domestic affairs. The maintenance of him and his numerous family necessarily, by law, falls upon thee. What sayest thou, prince ? ' Sultan Mohammed answered, ' Thou must pronounce the sentence of the law ! '—' This is the legal sentence,' replied the Kazi, ' if the architect requires the law to be strictly enforced, your hands must be cut off ; for if a man do an illegal act, which the noble law doth not allow, that law decrees that he be requited according to his deeds.' The sultan then offered to grant the architect a pension from the public treasury of the Mussul-

mans. 'No,' replied the Molla (doctor of laws), 'it is not lawful to take this from the public treasury; the offence was yours: my sentence therefore is, that from your own private purse you allow this maimed man ten aspers a-day.' —'Let it be twenty aspers a-day,' said the conqueror*; 'but let the cutting off his hands be legalized.' The architect in the contentment of his heart exclaimed, 'Be it accounted lawful in this world and the next;' and having received a patent for his pension, withdrew. Sultan Mohammed also received a certificate of his entire acquittal. The Kazi then apologized for having treated him as an ordinary suitor; pleading the rigid impartiality of the law, which requires justice to be administered to all without distinction; and entreated the emperor to seat himself on the sacred carpet. 'Effendi,' said the sultan, somewhat irritated, and drawing out the mace from the skirt of his robe, 'if thou hadst shown favour to me, saying to thyself, *This is the sultan*, and hadst wronged the architect, I would have broken thee to pieces with this mace.'"

In the Byzantine and Persian empires, justice was openly bought and sold; corruption was not merely tolerated, but avowed; bribes were offered and accepted in public. On the contrary, the Saracens established a rigid administration of law, and so strict was their system of criminal justice, that the sovereign, for many years, had not the power of pardoning a man whom the judges had condemned. Moáwiyah was the first who exercised the prerogative of mercy, being prevailed upon to arrest the course of justice by the beauty of the verses in which the culprit solicited pardon.

The feudal system, which so long was the disgrace and

* Mohammed II. was the conqueror of Constantinople.

bane of Europe, had no place among the Saracens; whilst throughout Christendom honest industry was regarded as the sign of subjection, and trade esteemed disgraceful, the Arabs gave every encouragement to labour and commerce. The countries that they subdued were long free from the fatal influence of feudalism; it has never penetrated into Corsica; it was unknown in Sardinia, Sicily, and Lower Italy, until after the expulsion of the Moors. In consequence of the protection and patronage granted to industry by the Saracenic monarchs, especially in Spain, agriculture and manufactures flourished, and commercial communications were formed, which extended from the extreme east of Asia* to the extreme west of Europe. The few manufactures which still exist in Spain are those that the Moors established. Perhaps it would not be too much to say, that it is to the example of the Saracens we are indebted for the progress of maritime discovery; since Spain and Portugal, whence the expeditions sailed that discovered America and the passage round the Cape of Good Hope, had learned the art of navigation from their Saracenic masters. Of the Arabians it might be said, with as much truth as of the Romans,

*Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit, et artes
Intulit agreste.*

When conquered Greece brought in her captive arts,
She triumphed o'er her savage conquerors' hearts.—FRANCIS.

Scarcely had the Arabians permanently established themselves in Western Asia, than they began to cultivate the sciences possessed by the vanquished, with a zeal and earnestness to which history furnishes no parallel. Unfor-

* About a century after the death of Mohammed, the Saracens established a factory at Canton.

unately the literature of Greece is so completely blended with mythology, that it was at once rejected by the Mohammedans, whose hatred of idolatry was blind and indiscriminate. They thus lost the advantage of improving their growing literature by the correct taste and bold spirit of the Greeks; but the romance of *Antar* proves that they had among themselves, at least the elements of literary strength and beauty.

Al Mansúr, who ascended the throne about a century after the death of Mohammed, was the first great patron of learning among the Khaliphs; he made no distinction between the men of letters, in whose society he delighted, on account of their religious opinions; an illustrious example of the intimate connexion between sound knowledge and a tolerant spirit. By him Bagdad was made the capital of the empire, and the foundation laid of that splendour which has identified the name of that city with all our notions of Oriental magnificence. Shortly after his removal to that city, he proved that he was not a slave to the bigoted maxims of the *Korán* by employing a Christian physician, named *George ebn-Bakhtishua*. He tried, indeed, to convert him, but *George* turned the matter off with a jest, saying, "O emperor of the faithful, I am determined to go to the place where my ancestors reside in the other world, whether that be paradise or hell." The Khaliph burst into a roar of laughter, and ceased from further importunity. It must, however, be confessed, that *Al Mansúr* was something of a humourist, with whom a witty saying was likely to be of more avail than a serious argument; for the speech he addressed to his son, a few hours before his death, is as curious a specimen of comic satire as any we have seen: "*Al Mohdi*," said the dying Khaliph, "I command you always to treat your relations

with respect, for their honour will be reflected back upon you: but this I believe you will not do. Increase the number of your freedmen, and treat them with kindness, for they will give you aid should fortune change: but this I believe you will not do. Enlarge not that part of the city on the eastern bank of the Tigris, for if you begin the work you will never be able to finish it: this, however, I know you will attempt. Permit not your wives to interfere in the affairs of state; and this you will assuredly allow. So, farewell."

Harún al Rashid, the grandson of Al Mansúr, is known to most persons as the hero of the *Arabian Nights*; it is sufficient here to say, that the character given of him in that celebrated work of fiction, as the generous patron of the arts and sciences, is historically correct. But his glory was eclipsed by that of his son Al Mansúr, who is justly termed the Augustus of the Saracens.

Al Mansúr, after having vanquished the forces of the Greek emperor, Michael III., was entreated to grant peace on any terms; all that he demanded from the conquered was copies of the works of the best Greek authors, and these he brought to Bagdad in triumphal procession, as the noblest trophies of victory. Before the close of his reign the Arabians had become well acquainted with the medicine, philosophy, mathematics, and natural history of the Greeks; and possessed good translations of the works of Hippocrates, Galen, Theophrastus, Ptolemy, Euclid and Aristotle. The astronomical works of Al Forgáni, written during this reign, were translated into Latin by Goliers, and still possess considerable repute among the learned. It deserves to be remarked, that some of the more bigoted Mohammedans regarded the introduction of science with suspicion, and accused the Khaliph of heresy. Some of these men

forced their way into Mansúr's chamber, a little before his death, and demanded of him to pronounce some prayer that would prove his orthodoxy. The Khaliph gratified them; lifting his eyes to heaven, he exclaimed, "O thou, who never diest, have mercy on thy dying servant."

The ancient historians dwell with great complacency on the flourishing state of the arts and sciences during the reign of Al Mamún. But in their eulogies we find a singular example of man's blindness to futurity. "The Khaliph," says Abulfaragius, "knew that philosophers are the persons whom God has chosen to develop the reason of his creatures, and elevate their desires above the things coveted by the brutes, the Turks, and the Chinese." He little knew that in a few years after these lines were traced, the Turks, whom he thus classes with the inferior animals, would be the masters of the Saracenic empire.

It would be unpardonable to omit, in this sketch, the generous patronage afforded to literature by the noble house of the Barmecides. The first of this family that became conspicuous was Yahya-ebn-Khaled-ebn-Barmac, who was appointed tutor to Harún al Rashid by the Khaliph Al Mohdi. Yahya claimed descent from the ancient kings of Persia, and was treated by the Khaliph more as an equal than a subject; he possessed a princely fortune, which he expended in the patronage of the arts, and he laboured successfully to inspire his pupil with similar taste and generosity. At his death Yahya left behind him four sons, who by no means degenerated from their father's virtues, but on the contrary, raised the glory and greatness of the Barmecides to the highest pitch. The most illustrious of the four was Jaafar, known to every reader of the *Arabian Nights* as the vizier of Al Rashid. After having been long the greatest ornaments of that brilliant

court, the Barmecides, from some circumstances which the historians do not very fully explain, incurred the resentment of the Khaliph, and an edict was issued for their extermination. The fatal decree was mercilessly executed, and thus fell a family that had done more for the arts and sciences than any other that ever existed. Proclamations were issued, forbidding any person to mention the name of the Barmecides, under pain of death:—

But man's chainless heart
Hides that within its depths which never yet
The oppressor's thought could reach*.

An aged man of letters, named Mondic, who had long enjoyed the patronage of that noble family, refused obedience to the tyrannical precept. He placed himself on an eminence before one of their ruined palaces, pronounced a fervid eulogium on their virtues, recited all the services they had performed to the state, and bewailed their fate in terms that at once reached the hearts of his hearers. Crowds assembled round the daring and grateful orator; murmurs arose, as from men in whom fear and deep feeling struggled for mastery; there was reason to dread that excited passion would lead to open violence. Intelligence of these circumstances was conveyed to the Khaliph; he ordered Mondic to be arrested and brought before him. Harún, in a voice of thunder, demanded of him how he dared to disobey the imperial edict? Mondic, in reply, stated the obligations he was under to the house of Barmac, in language so powerful that the Khaliph himself was affected, and not only gave him his life, but presented him with a golden dish that lay near. "See here," exclaimed Mondic, "another favour I have received from the house

* Mrs. Hemans's *Mourner for the Barmecides*.

of Barmac!" An expression which has since passed into a proverb, current in every part of Asia. Harún found himself unable to suppress the fame of the Barmecides; their names are still quoted by Oriental historians, as synonymous with everything that is elevated in sentiment, generous in disposition, and refined in taste.

The cultivation of literature among the Saracens produced more immediate effects on the general condition of the people, than the revival of learning did on the nations of Christendom. The Arabs had no learned language, all the knowledge acquired was published in the vulgar tongue, and was freely open to all who sought information. Such an advantage they long possessed exclusively; notwithstanding the noble example of making knowledge easy of access, exhibited by the Moors in Spain, the vulgar tongues throughout the greater part of Europe were used only in discourse. All writing—literary, scientific, or political, was in Latin; even sermons were usually delivered in that language, though sometimes an interpretation was given for the edification of the audience. Even now the Romish Church keeps up the senseless habit of celebrating the Mass in Latin, before congregations utterly ignorant of that language.

The Saracens of Spain rivalled, if they did not surpass, the literary excellence of their brethren in the East. Cordova was the western Bagdad, and from it the first knowledge of science was obtained by the descendants of the Goths and Vandals. Abd'-al-rahman, called to head the partisans of the Ommyade house in the West, when the Abassides triumphed in the East, was a man of superior literary attainments. Remembering that the Ommyades were descended from the old rulers of the Koreish, he resolved that the magnificence of his court should eclipse

that of his rivals, the Abasside Khaliphs. There is a little poem of his on the first palm-tree introduced into Spain, which represents him in the midst of worldly greatness, regretting the scenes of his early youth. Its simplicity, which is its chief beauty, would be lost in a paraphrase, and we therefore must give the literal translation.

“Fair palm-tree, thou also art a stranger here! The gentle airs of Algarbe court and kiss thee. Thy roots are fixed in a fertile soil; thy head is erected towards Heaven; but thou, too, wouldst shed tears of bitterness, if, like me, thou couldst look back! But thou feelest not as I do the calamities of fortune. I wept under the palms which the Forat waters, when my unhappy fate, and the cruelty of the Abasside, compelled me to forsake what I so dearly loved. The trees and the river have forgotten my sorrows, and thou, my beloved country, retainest no remembrance of me! But never shall I cease to lament for thee.”

The sovereign that felt thus must have had great natural endowments, and the beauty with which he expresses his sentiments, leads us to give credit to the historian who calls Abd'-al-rahman the best patron of literature, and the best example to literary men.

Architecture was the art in which the Spanish Saracens displayed most strength. Their mosques, palaces, and public halls, were erected on a scale of magnificence beyond those displayed by Greece or Rome in their proudest days. To enumerate the remains of their splendid buildings would require several volumes; we need only mention the Alhambra, to show how great a share the Saracens had in reviving the architectural art in modern Europe. To them, also, we owe the science of chemistry, which was, in fact, the first branch of experimental philosophy, as it is still one of the most important. For it must be remembered that those

who led the way to the cultivation of experimental science, Gerbert and Adelhard, had both studied in the Moorish universities. The obligations of mathematical science to the Arabians are universally acknowledged, the very name of algebra proves its Oriental origin; indeed, Mohammed ebn Musa, who lived in the reign of the Khaliph Al Mamún, was long regarded as the inventor of that branch of science. This has been proved erroneous by reference to the work itself, which has been recently published by the Oriental Translation Committee, but the editor (Dr. Rosen) has ably shown that Ebn-Musa considerably extended and improved the mode of algebraic calculation.

It is not necessary to extend this subject further; those who wish to know more of the benefits conferred on modern Europe by the scientific and literary exertions of the Saracens, will find ample information in the works of the Rev. Dr. Forster and Mr. Sharon Turner; enough has been said to show that the charge, commonly urged against the Mohammedan religion, of being adverse to knowledge and civilization, is a groundless calumny.

The progress of Saracenic civilization was checked by political commotion; it was finally destroyed by the Turks, who adopted a form of government that crushed every exertion of the intellect. It is, however, the form of Turkish policy, not the nature of the Turkish religion, that has prevented the cultivation of science. The complete separation of the church from the state in that country; the formation of a body of doctors of the law, interested in preventing anything like innovation, have been among the causes that prevented the Turks from ever emulating the literary glory of the Saracens. The Sheikh Refáa, an intelligent Egyptian, sent by Mehemet Ali to

Paris for the purpose of becoming acquainted with European sciences, and teaching them after his return, has published an account of his travels, in which he endeavours to evade the charge of heresy with a dexterity which Galileo might have envied. "The French," he says, "excel in the practical sciences, and possess also an intimate acquaintance with the speculative sciences. They have, however, certain philosophical opinions, which do not accord with the belief of other nations. But they support them so ably, and colour them so eloquently that they have a strong semblance of reality. In astronomy, for instance, they are very learned, and the aid of the instruments they have invented has rendered them far superior to the ancients. But they have mingled with this science some heretical opinions contrary to the Holy Books, such as the assertion, that the earth revolves on its axis, &c. They support these opinions by arguments which it is difficult to refute. I could cite several of these paradoxes, and will perhaps point them out to the reader at a future period. At present I shall only say, that their scientific works are full of paradoxes of this kind. The Mussulman who wishes to study French books, must first attach himself strongly to the holy Korán and the religious traditions, to secure himself from the danger of having his faith weakened or perverted." . . . He takes care, however, to insinuate, but very cautiously, more just opinions: "A wise European has pretended that the assertion of the earth's revolution on its axis, and its globular shape, is not contradictory to the Holy Scriptures. In fact, he says, the sacred writings, in those passages designed to convey man moral instruction, have employed terms conformable to the appearance of the phenomena, and not to scientific exactness. Thus it is said, 'God caused the sun to stand still;' that signifies He retarded the

moment of the disappearance of that luminary, an effect produced, in reality, by the suspension of the earth's motions. The Holy Book speaks as if the sun itself had stood still, because to the eye the sun appears to have motion."

These extracts sufficiently show that the bigotry of the Turks is abating, and that they begin to regard European science with an eye of favour. They will probably never attain the same comparative eminence as the Saracens, but they will cease to be satisfied with the pride of ignorance, and no longer present a barrier to the reflux of knowledge from Europe to Asia.



APPENDIX.

APPENDIX I.

THE MOHAMMEDAN ACCOUNTS OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT,
UNDER THE NAME OF DHU'LKHARNEIN
(THE TWO-HORNED).

ALEXANDER the Great, is frequently called Dhu'lkharnein, or "the two-horned," by Oriental writers, as some think, because, on many of his coins he is represented with horns, as being the son of Jupiter Ammon, but more probably in allusion to the prophetic description of him given by Daniel, in the vision of the ram and the he-goat. Under this name he is the hero of a very extraordinary narrative in the Korán, which we think it right to insert.

"The Jews will ask thee," says Gabriel, "concerning DHU'LKHARNEIN (the two-horned). Answer, I will rehearse to you an account of him. We made him powerful in the earth, and we gave him means to accomplish everything he pleased. And he followed his way, until he came to the place where the sun setteth, and he found it to set in a spring of black mud; and he found near the same a certain people. And we said, 'O, DHU'LKHARNEIN, either punish this people, or use gentleness towards them.' He answered, 'Whosoever of them shall commit injustice, we will surely punish him; afterwards he shall return to the LORD, and he shall punish him with severe chastisement. But whosoever believeth, and doth that which is right, shall receive the most excellent reward, and we will give him in command, that which is easy.' Then he continued his way, until he came to the place where

the sun riseth; and he found it to rise on certain people, unto whom we had not given anything wherewith to shelter themselves therefrom. And we knew by our presence the forces that were with him. And he pursued his journey, until he came between two mountains, where he found people who could scarce understand language. They said, 'O DHU'LK-HARNEIN, certainly Gog and Magog waste our land; shall we therefore pay thee tribute, provided thou buildest a wall between us and them?' He answered, 'The power with which God has strengthened me, is better than your tribute; assist me strenuously, and I will place a strong fortification between you and them. Bring me iron in large pieces to fill up the space between the two mountains;' then he said, 'Blow it until the iron be ignited and soft.' Then he said, 'Bring melted brass to pour over the iron, so that Gog and Magog may neither be able to scale, nor perforate the wall.' And DHU'LK-HARNEIN said, 'I have done this through the gracious mercy of the Lord. But when the fulfilment of the Lord's prediction shall arrive, he shall reduce this wall to powder; for the prediction of my Lord is true.'"—*Korán*, chap. 18.

The tradition on which this story is based, manifestly relates to the erection of a wall or castle in the north-east of Persia, for the purpose of checking the invasions of the Scythians; Gog and Magog being the name applied in the Old Testament to the Tartar hordes. Some of the Mohammedan writers seeing the utter absurdity of inserting such a legend as this, in a period of authentic history, pretend that there were two Dhu'lkharneins, and that this anecdote refers to the former, who lived before the age of Abraham. This, however, is manifestly an evasion to save the authority of the *Korán*. Tabari's account of the circumstances which induced Mohammed to insert such a legend, serves best to elucidate the origin of the fiction. He tells us that when Mohammed first announced his prophetic mission, the Jews sent him a series of questions declaring that by their solution, his claim to inspiration would be determined; one of these questions related to Gog and Magog; another, it would appear, referred

to the interpretation of Daniel's vision of the ram and he-goat. There is nothing improbable in this anecdote, for we learn incidentally, from Josephus, that these very questions were frequently discussed in the rabbinical schools. The solution given of them by Mohammed, is recorded by Tabari, and it is very remarkable, because it is precisely the same as the account given by the ancient Syrian commentators on the Bible, and consequently it adds to the probability of the tradition, that Mohammed received important aid from a Syrian monk. Tabari thus records Mohammed's answer:—

“Gog and Magog were two brothers; they belong to the children of Adam; they are of extremely small stature, and each of them has two ears, like the ears of an elephant*. They are a numerous people, and ravaged the world. They dwell in the East, near the place where the sun rises. Now there is a very lofty mountain which separates them from us; they sometimes cross that mountain to devastate the adjacent territories. To enter into the country that we inhabit, they have but a single road (probably the pass of the Caspian gates), and they have never been able to discover any other passage. They destroyed all that they found on the face of the earth, plants, fountains, trees, and other such things, devouring them

* This description is not very inapplicable to the Mongolian race in North-eastern Asia; the great mountains of Altai are probably the mountainous fence to which the tradition alludes, as separating Gog and Magog from the rest of the human race. All the ancient commentators understand by these names the Scythian nations, but they do not specify whether they mean Tartar or Mongolian races. In the passage of the Revelations where these names are mentioned, they clearly signify nations. “And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle.”—*Revelations*, xx. 7, 8.

Perhaps the names are derived from the Hebrew גג “a covering,” in allusion to the tents in which these nomade hordes live. The many revolutions which the Tartar nations have effected in Asia, must be familiar to every reader of history; a Byzantine writer says, that in the age of Justinian it was a current prophecy that “the Roman empire should be destroyed by the dwellers in tents.”

all; and if they had obtained victory over us, they would have slain and eaten us. These people have a great number of towns and habitations, towards the place where the sun rises, and when he rises they go down into the ground.

“When the men who inhabit the countries near Gog and Magog, heard of the fame of Dhu’lkharnein, who was over-running the world, they assembled themselves and went towards him in a body; they asked him for aid, and said, ‘We will pay thee tribute; undertake this enterprise, and build a wall between us and Gog and Magog, that these people may not subdue us.’ Dhu’lkharnein entered the country and examined all the circumstances. He then demanded from the inhabitants all their iron and brass, and erected a wall so very strong, that for the future they were delivered from Gog and Magog.”—*Tarikh Tabari*, by *Dubœuf*; chap. viii.

This strange narrative is beyond all doubt founded on the campaign of Alexander against the Scythians, at the close of which he erected a chain of fortresses to restrain their incursions.

It confirms in some degree, the Rev. Mr. Forster’s* ingenious application of Daniel’s prophecy to the Saracenic heresy, that this very prophecy from the beginning attracted the attention of the Saracens themselves, and was made the test of their prophet’s mission.

APPENDIX II.

MOHAMMED’S NIGHT JOURNEY TO HEAVEN.

A FRIEND to whom the plan of this work was submitted, and who, to an intimate acquaintance with Oriental literature, adds the rarer qualification of sound judgment, recommended the author not to interrupt the course of his narrative by inserting the fable of the journey to heaven, in Mohammed’s

* *Mohammedanism Unveiled*, 2 vols. London, 1829.

life, but to place it at the close of the volume, with such remarks as would illustrate the origin of this very extraordinary legend.

In the twelfth year of his preaching, Mohammed still continued his practice of retiring occasionally into the mountains, for the purpose of meditating in solitude on the great task he had undertaken. During one of these excursions, he lay down to sleep between the mountains Al Safá and Merwá, in the neighbourhood of Mecca, and there he had a vision, in which he seemed to have proceeded from earth through the seven heavens, even to the throne of God. There is certainly no improbability in his having had some such dream; on the contrary, it is exceedingly likely that, when his imagination was excited by the meditations of the day, some vision of magnificence may have visited his slumbers. It may even have seemed to him that this dream had in it something supernatural, and was therefore a proof of his projects having received a divine sanction. The time stated is exactly the period when Mohammed's enthusiasm was beginning to be tinged with imposture; and at such a period the mind is more than usually ingenious in deceiving itself, catching at every trifle that may serve to stifle the reproaches of conscience.

In the Korán, Mohammed twice alludes to the circumstance, on both occasions quoting it as an indisputable proof of the truth of his mission; but not very distinctly stating whether he regarded the circumstance as a real event or a dream. Indeed, it seems as if he wished to leave the matter so doubtful that the credulous might take it for a real miracle, while an evasion was reserved to meet the objections of the more intelligent. Moawiyáh, the first of the Ommiade Khaliphs, declared that Mohammed told him it was a vision; and as Moawiyáh was remarkable for anything rather than credulity, it is probable that Mohammed had the good sense not to attempt to deceive him; but we find him, in all the authorized traditions, directly asserting the reality of his journey, and generally adding some new circumstance every time he repeated the story. The commentators profited by his example;

every new narrator seemed to think it his duty to add some new and wondrous circumstance, until at length it became a regular romance, that has scarcely a parallel in the whole range of fiction.

The following abstract of the tale includes most of the circumstances which form a part of popular belief in the East: we say popular belief, because, though the vulgar, with their usual appetite for the marvellous, implicitly believe the whole, most of the educated Mohammedans adopt the opinion of Moawiyáh, that it was only a dream.

While Mohammed slept, according to the story, the angel Gabriel, wearing seventy pair of wings, and accompanied by an attendant spirit, came and saluted him, declaring that he was commissioned to lead him into the presence of God. To prepare him for appearing in the presence of the Infinitely Pure, Gabriel took out the prophet's heart, wrung from it the black drop of original sin, filled the cavity with wisdom and faith, and then restored the heart to its former place.

Gabriel then brought to Mohammed the sacred animal on which the prophets used to ride when sent to execute a divine command. This animal, in shape, resembled an ass, but was somewhat larger; its face was like that of a man; it had the jaws of a horse, the wings of an eagle, and eyes brighter than the star Aldebaran. From its great velocity, it was named Al Borák, the Thunderer, or rather the Author of Lightning. Al Borák was endowed with reason and intelligence, but it was only on special occasions that he was allowed the faculty of speech*.

When Mohammed was preparing to mount Al Borák, the beast kicked with great force, and would not permit him to approach. Upon this, Gabriel interposed, and said, "Stand still, Al Borák, and be obedient to Mohammed, for never did a greater favourite of God than he is ascend thy back."—The

* This description is taken from the Rabbinical accounts of Balaam's ass. India is the parent of these monstrous combinations of animals; they were adopted in Persia, as appears by the sculptured remains of Persepolis; the Jews learned them during the Babylonish captivity.

faculty of speech was on this occasion conceded to the sacred beast. He replied, "Did not Abraham, O Gabriel! ascend upon me, when, by the command of God, he went to visit his son Ishmael? Perhaps, O thou mighty among the angels, this is the mediator who is to teach the new religion, of which the fundamental doctrine shall be, *THERE IS NO GOD BUT GOD.*"—The archangel mildly answered, "Stand still, Al Borák; this is Mohammed, the son of a servant of God, the chief of the descendants of Adam, the prince and seal of the prophets; at his right hand is paradise, and on his left hell-fire; whoever witnesses to his truth shall inherit eternal life; but whoever accuses him of falsehood, shall be cast into hell."—Al Borák then, in a tone of humble supplication, replied, "I adjure thee, O prince of the angels, to prevail upon Mohammed, thy friend and ally, that he may, by his intercession, procure for me admittance into paradise on the great day of the resurrection."—Mohammed hearing this, was moved with compassion, and said, "Stand still, Al Borák; through my intercession thou shalt become immortal." The beast then knelt before him, Mohammed ascended, and, ere the eye could wink, he was carried through the air to Jerusalem.

When he reached the holy city, he repaired to the temple, which on this night reappeared in its pristine splendour; there he met Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, with whom he joined in prayer. He then fastened Al Borák to a wondrous ring of iron that had been placed by Solomon near the entrance of the temple for the purpose of fettering the rebellious Gins, and forcing them to witness the worship of the orthodox.

In the meantime Gabriel had prepared a ladder of light, the same which Israel had seen*, extending from earth to heaven. By this the archangel and the prophet ascended until they reached the gate of the first celestial region. No language can express the height and grandeur of this gate, the beauty of the

* Horace says, "*Pictoribus atque poetis Quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua potestas;*" but the Rabbins claimed a power beyond the poets, for they described the dream of Jacob as a real event, and with edifying accuracy named every step in the ladder.

portals, the exquisite workmanship of the doors. Gabriel announced that he had brought Mohammed with him, upon which the massive doors flew open of their own accord, and the archangel led in the prophet.

Mohammed observed, that the first heaven was a floor of silver, from which the stars hung suspended like lamps from a vaulted roof, by chains of gold, each as thick as a mountain. In each of the stars he saw an angel, stationed as a sentinel, to prevent the devils and the rebellious spirits of the middle air from acting as spies on the actions of the inhabitants of heaven. After the prophet had advanced within the gate, he was met by a very aged man, who saluted him by the endearing title of son, called him the best of his children, and solicited the benefit of his prayers. Gabriel informed him that this venerable sage was Adam, the great father of the human race, who was destined to hold an inferior place in heaven*. They passed onwards, and met the wondrous bird, whose feet are in the lowest, while his head is in the highest heaven, a distance of three thousand years' journey asunder. Gabriel informed his companion that this bird was a cock, adding, that every species of animals had angelic representatives in heaven, but that the cock was the most honoured, because it was ever the first to pay morning homage to the Creator. The brilliant appearance of the bird, the splendour of the emeralds and rubies that adorned his wings, and the melody of his notes, surpass all powers of description. The crowing of this cock is heard by all beings except men and Gins; its cessation will be one of the signs of the near approach of the resurrection†.

* This account of Adam's situation in the lowest heaven is borrowed from the Jews; but the Rabbies are not quite agreed upon the point. Maracci's *Commentary on the Korán*, and Eisenmenger's *Judaism Unveiled*, contain very good collections of Rabbinical traditions, and will be found very convenient to those who have not patience to wade through the tiresome pages of the Talmud.

† The description of this wondrous bird is borrowed from the Talmud of Babylon, almost word for word. The Rabbinical doctors have taken the story from the Persian Simoorg or Simurg, a bird of great size (its name signifies thirty eagles), and endowed with superior intelligence.

Though the distance between each of the heavens is a journey of five hundred years, yet Mohammed, aided by Gabriel, passed it in less than an hour. He found the floor of the second heaven to be a species of iron called Maun : Noah saluted him as he entered, and, on advancing a little further, he met John the Baptist, who made him an obeisance, in acknowledgment of his superiority. Mohammedan authors, inclined to favour the Jews, say that their prophet met Jesus in the second, and Abraham in the seventh, heaven; this order is reversed by those who are more partial to Christianity.

Having entered the third heaven, Mohammed found that its floor was composed of a species of iron called Zaitún. Here he met an angel of such enormous bulk, that the distance between his eyes was a journey of seventy thousand days *. Before this mysterious being was a table, on which he was constantly writing some words and blotting out others ; Mohammed inquired the meaning of this, and was told that the angel had the charge of the table of human life, from which he erased the names of those whose term of existence had expired, and inserted the names of those who were just coming into the world. In every heaven there were angelic inhabitants peculiar to it; and the number of these beings increased, the higher he ascended. Mohammed, having joined in devotion with the angels of the third heaven, passed on to the fourth.

The purest gold formed the floor of the fourth heaven : the angels, by which it was inhabited, were superior in beauty and intelligence to all those whom Mohammed had yet seen : one of them, whose stature equalled that of the angel guarding

To the same family belongs the Roc of the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments* ; perhaps, also, the Eagle that attends upon Jupiter, though he does not exceed the natural dimensions.

There are occasions, when "to be grave exceeds all powers of face;" and truly, to discuss, as some authors have done, the dimensions of the Talmudic Zin and the Mohammedan cock mathematically, and show, by the errors in the proportions of size, that no such bird could have existed, appears an excess of gravity to which but few can attain.

* Dr. Prideaux takes the trouble of showing the arithmetical blunder in this statement; he proves that the distance, supposing the angel, when standing up, would exactly touch the ceiling, could only be four-

the table in the third heaven, was engaged in constantly lamenting the sins of men, and praying for their repentance and pardon*. Edris, or Enoch, was the patriarch that met Mohammed here, and, according to some narratives, accompanied him to the fifth heaven.

Aaron saluted Mohammed on his entrance into the fifth heaven, whose floor was composed of the finest adamant. From this place, the prophet obtained a view of the hell reserved for faithless disciples and unbelieving Arabs; its horrors were of course aggravated, by the strong contrast they afforded to the pleasures and glories by which they were surrounded.

The floor of the sixth heaven was composed of crystal, which was not only transparent itself, but enabled the inhabitants to see through other bodies; for hence the interior of all the former heavens, and the earth itself, could be clearly beheld†. Moses here met the prophet, and, at sight of him, burst into tears, lamenting that a boy had been sent after him, who would, in a few years, bring more converts to the truth, and consequently more individuals to paradise, than there were

teen thousand days' journey. Gibbon accuses the Doctor of exaggerating the absurdities in this narrative; a charge wholly groundless: Prideaux's error is attributing the whole invention to Mohammed, instead of the commentators. Mohammed only supplied a general outline, which may be seen in the Korán and the Mischcat; the rest was supplied by the perverted ingenuity of his followers.

* This angel is of Christian parentage: he is mentioned by several of the writers of the dark ages, especially in the monkish treatises on paradise. One of these worthies, Ægidius de Columna, if we remember aright, gravely proves the existence of this being, from the Scriptural text, "There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth," for, argues he, joy could not exist unless there had been previous sorrow. The curious reader will find many similar instances of idle inventions in the tract of Ludovicus Vives *on the Abuse of Learning*, in Cave's *Historia Literaria*, and in Morhof's *Polyhistor*.—The Apocryphal Revelations of St. Peter we have not seen, but the extracts given from the work, in Gagnier's Notes on Abulfeda, prove that the Mohammedans borrowed largely from it in this narrative.

† This property is assigned to pure crystal, in many of the ancient Persian legends. The reader need scarcely be reminded how frequently magic glasses are mentioned in the *Arabian Nights*.

now Israelites in the celestial regions, though the Jews had possessed a divine law during so many centuries.

Mohammed at length reached the seventh heaven, whose magnificence exceeded that of all the preceding. Its floor was composed of embodied light*. Here he saw an angel the largest of God's creatures; it had seventy thousand faces, each face had seventy thousand mouths, in every mouth were seventy thousand tongues, and every tongue incessantly praised God in seventy thousand languages. We have already mentioned that there is some difference between the commentators, with respect to the persons whom Mohammed met in the seventh heaven; the greater number, however, declare that it was Abraham, and add, that he entertained the prophet in a palace called Al Mamúr, or "the visited," because it is visited daily by seventy thousand† angels. In shape, it resembles the Temple of Mecca, and, should it ever descend from heaven, it will fall exactly on that holy spot. Here Gabriel presented Mohammed with two cups, one containing milk, and the other wine; the prophet chose the former, upon which a voice was heard, saying, "Wisely hast thou chosen, O Mohammed, beloved apostle of God, for, hadst thou taken the wine, thy nation would soon have apostatized, and their enterprises have consequently proved unsuccessful."

Near Al Mamúr is planted a stupendous lote-tree, watered by the four rivers of paradise, beyond which none of the angels, not even Gabriel himself, is permitted to pass, and beyond which, Mohammed alone was suffered to acquire knowledge. It bears fruits shaped like water-pots, and leaves like the ears of elephants. The delicious taste of its fruits transcends all that the imagination can conceive; and one of them would be

* This notion is borrowed from the Talmudists.

† The frequent occurrence of this number, which is so great a favourite with the Rabbins, leads us to suppose that they were the inventors of this part of the fable. The description of Mamúr, however, is taken from the Apocryphal *Revelations of St. Peter*, as Gagnier has shown, by extracts from that work. It may be necessary to add, that the Apocryphal description is a very dull imitation of the account given of the New Jerusalem, by St. John, in the Apocalypse.

sufficient for the sustenance of the universe*. At this tree Mohammed met a new guide, named Israfil, by whom he was led over infinite tracts of space, and through myriads of celestial intelligences, incessantly employed in singing the praises of God†. At length Mohammed entered the Beatific Presence, and was permitted to approach within two bows'-lengths of the throne of God. On the throne, he saw engraved the words which he subsequently made the symbol of his faith, **THERE IS NO GOD BUT GOD, AND MOHAMMED IS THE APOSTLE OF GOD.** The words spoken by God to his s^{ér}vant could not be revealed; we are only told, that God ordered the Mussulmans to pray fifty times every day, but that the prophet, by the advice of Moses, begged that the number should be reduced to five, and that he obtained his request. Some of the commentators add many extravagant circumstances to this, the most blasphemous portion of the narrative, the repetition of which would justly be regarded as offensive. Israfil, when the interview was concluded, led Mohammed back to Gabriel, and they at once set out on their return to Mecca; as they approached the earth, the sun was rising over the chain of the Caucasus, and they saw the kingdoms of Armenia and Azerbiján, like two small grass-plots, beneath them. At Jerusalem they met Al Borák, who transported the prophet to Mecca, ere the sun had fully risen on the earth, so that the entire journey occupied but a single night.

It would be as unfair to blame Mohammed for the whole of this monstrous legend, as to accuse the author of the apocryphal Book of Enoch, for all the nonsense which the Eastern monks have written respecting the visits of the angels to earth. In fact, we are able to trace the process of the formation of the

* This description is borrowed from the perverted account given by the Talmudists, of the "tree of life."

† The names, orders, powers, &c., of these superior classes of emanative beings, are recorded by some of the Mohammedan doctors; but the whole is borrowed from the incomprehensible system of the Jewish Cabala. The reader, who has any curiosity to know more of the absurd imaginings, gravely published on this subject as ascertained truths, may consult the *Celestial Hierarchy* of Dionysius the Areopagite.

legend, if not with certainty, at least with very strong probability. Mohammed had a singular dream, which made a strong impression on his mind,—so strong that he spoke of it as a proof of his mission. The asseverations of Abú-Bekr induced some of the early Mussulmans to receive it as such, and Mohammed, having discovered the use to which the tale could be applied, frequently repeated it to his followers, occasionally adding some new circumstances to enhance his authority. His followers, eager to exaggerate his importance, worked into the tale all the circumstances that they found in the legends of the Jewish rabbins and Syrian monks; and after all, they left untouched, in both, fictions infinitely more monstrous than those they worked into the narrative. Of this, the reader will soon be convinced, that consults Basnage's *History of the Jews*, Eisenmenger on the Rabbinical Fables, or any of the tracts on paradise and the angels produced by the monks of the Eastern or Western Churches, before the revival of learning.

The superstitious attention paid by the Orientals to dreams is sufficiently notorious, and many of the Mohammedan traditions relate the interpretations which the prophet gave of the dreams of his followers. Tabari says, "One day an Arab of the desert came to search for the prophet, (may the blessing of God be upon him!) and said to him; 'I saw last night in my dreams a large field, and in the midst of this field was a large pulpit having seven steps, and no more; you, O prophet, stood on the lowest step.' The apostle of God (may God be propitious to him, and grant peace to him and his!) replied; 'The field that you saw is this world, which will have seven thousand years of existence; and, if you saw me on the lowest step, it is because I have come in the last thousand of these seven thousand years, and it is a sign that the end of the world is not far distant.' Some Jews who were present said, 'We have discovered in the Pentateuch what you have just mentioned.' " To the Arabs, indeed, the "Night Journey," told as a dream, would have proved nearly as strong an argument in favour of Mohammed, as if it had been related as an historical argument. The emperor Timúr, in his autobiography,

assures us, that a dream which one of the Syeds (descendants of Mohammed, had, just after his accession to the throne, greatly tended to strengthen his power. The imperial author thus tells the story: "In the year of the Hegira 771 (A. D. 1378), when I had driven the Jetes (Uzbeks) out of Tūran, and mounted the throne, and had directed the royal proclamation to be read from all the pulpits, the Syeds, the prelates, the rich, and the poor, all raised their hands to heaven in prayer for my prosperity; but Khuajé Abyd, who was the most celebrated prelate of that time, forbade them to pray for me, saying, 'Do not pray for this murderer and blood-thirsty Turk, who has put to death an innumerable number of Mussulmans, nor repeat blessings on him.' On that very night the Khuajé dreamed that he saw me standing in the présence of his holiness the prophet, that he entered and several times made his obeisance to Mohammed without his salutation being returned: at length he called out, 'O messenger of God, do you permit this wretch Timúr, who has murdered hundreds of thousands of your followers, and who has destroyed the habitations of so many Mussulmans, to stand near you, whilst you do not return the salutation of me, who am the zealous supporter of your religion, and the establisher of your law?' His holiness replied to him, in an angry manner, 'Although Timúr has shed much of the blood of my followers, as he has been the friend, the supporter, and respecer of my posterity and descendants, why dost thou forbid the people to pray for and bless him?' The Khuajé, having awoke, came even during the night to me, and asked pardon. When this intelligence reached the people, they all raised their hands in prayer for my prosperity, and, considering me as supported by the Divine favour, bore witness to my right."

There may, indeed, be some suspicion of collusion in this instance, but it is sufficient to prove the great influence of dreams over Eastern nations; indeed, Timúr says, that he records his own dreams as proofs of his having been an instrument chosen to execute the Divine decrees.

APPENDIX III.

THE NATURE AND STYLE OF THE KORAN.

WHEN Mohammed was asked to attest the truth of his mission by a miracle, he appealed to the Korán, and demanded whether his adversaries could produce any work that could rival it in sublimity and beauty; they tried, and failed. Lebid, the most celebrated poet of Yemen, brought a moral poem to the Kaaba, which he suspended in the temple, as was the custom; Mohammed hung by it a passage from the Korán, which when Lebid had read, he exclaimed, "No one could write these words without the immediate inspiration of God," and immediately embraced Mohammedanism*. The Mussulmans of the present day regard the volume as an unrivalled prodigy, and are won-

* The quotation which produced such an effect on Lebid's mind was the following passage, describing the Korán and the character of those by whom it is rejected.

"There is nothing doubtful in this book: it is a direction to the pious, who believe in the mysteries of faith, who observe the appointed times of prayer, who distribute alms out of what we have bestowed upon them, who believe in the revelation which hath been sent down to thee, and in that which hath been sent down to the prophets before thee, and who have firm assurance in the life to come: these are directed by their Lord, and they shall prosper.

"As for the unbelievers, whether thou admonish them or do not admonish them, they will not believe; God hath sealed up their hearts and their hearing; a dimness covereth their sight, and they shall suffer a grievous punishment.

"There are some who say we believe in God and the last day, but in reality are not believers, they seek to deceive God, and those who do believe; but they deceive themselves only, and are not sensible thereof.

"They are like unto one who kindleth a fire, and when it hath enlightened all around him, he shuts his eyes. God taketh away their light and leaveth them in darkness; they shall not see; they are deaf, and dumb, and blind, therefore they will not repent.

"Or, like a stormy cloud from heaven fraught with darkness, thunder, and lightning; they put their fingers in their ears, because of the noise of the thunder, for fear of death. God encompasseth the infidels; the lightning wanteth but little to take away their sight; so often as it

drously affected by the measured march of its sentences, the harmony and variety of its metrical cadences, and the irregular recurrence of its single and double rhymes. It is scarcely possible to imitate in a western language the modulations of which the Arabic is susceptible, but as the beauties which the Arabians most admire are necessarily lost in the literal version of Sale, we have ventured, after the experiment of Baron Von Hammer, to try the experiment of rendering two short chapters as nearly as possible in their original form.

CHAP. 99.—*The Earthquake at the Day of Judgment.*

1. When the earth with shaking is quaking,
2. When from her burthen she off is breaking,
3. And man demands, What aileth her?
4. On that day her tidings she shall be unfolding,
5. Which then the Lord revealeth her,
6. On that day shall men come in throngs their works showing;
7. And who one grain of good has done, shows it then;
8. And who one grain of ill has done, shows it then.

CHAP. 112.—*The Declaration of God's Unity*.*

1. Say; God is one God.
2. He is the eternal.
3. He hath nought begotten.
4. He is not begotten.
5. Like Him there is none.

enlighteneth them they walk therein, but when the darkness cometh on them they stand still.”—*Carlyle's Specimens*, 2, 3.

There is, however, some reason to believe that Lebid was actuated merely by temporal motives, for he persevered in the use of luxuries forbidden by the Korán, and was by no means a strict observer of the ceremonies enjoined to all who professed Islám.

* This chapter is greatly celebrated in the traditions. “Abú-Dardáa reported that his highness said, ‘Is not one of you able to repeat a third part of the Korán in one night?’ The companions said, ‘How can any one repeat a third in one night? for it is not without difficulty.’ Moham-med said, ‘The chapter commencing with these words, *Say, God is one God*, is equal to a third part of the Korán in rewards.’”—*Mischcat ul Masábih*, i. 503.

But though many splendid passages may be found in the Korán, sublime in thought and grand in expression, yet the entire work is one of the most tiresome in existence, utterly destitute of arrangement or connexion, and frequently at variance with common sense. To understand the causes of this confusion, we must remember that Mohammed actually propagated two religions perfectly distinct; the one almost purely ascetic, while he remained in obscurity at Mecca; the other breathing a mingled spirit of sensualism and propagandism, when his power was established at Medina. The chapters which inculcate the former, are infinitely superior, both in matter and manner, to those which teach the latter doctrines; and when the Mussulmans are asked to justify their extravagant eulogies of the Korán, they invariably refer to the passages revealed at Mecca. We have already seen that Mohammed forged revelations to suit every occasion, however trifling, and that on his death-bed he wished to dictate a more consistent standard of faith, than the miscellaneous collection of revelations which he had aggregated; hence we deem it probable that he never designed to collect his scattered revelations, and that had he undertaken the task, the Korán would now present less grossness and less absurdity. After his death, all his revelations were collected by command of Abú-Bekr, and put together without any regard to order or consistency. A collection of the Sibylline leaves, put together after the winds had scattered them, by a person who could not read, would scarcely present a more anomalous compound than the Korán in its present state; the leaves of all the books in a library jumbled together would scarcely exhibit more disorder and confusion. The commentators have, with tolerable accuracy, distinguished the Meccan from the Medinese chapters, but there is reason to believe that many of the chapters contain passages which did not originally belong to them, and that the complete disentanglement is reserved for some future critic, if such a being could exist in a Mohammedan country. It is, however, of importance to keep steadily in view the distinction between the pure Islám of Mecca, and the corrupted

system substituted for it at Medina*, since we find that when Mohammedan nations became civilized, they have chosen the former, while the barbarous followers of the prophet have adhered to the latter. There would be little addition, and still less alteration, required to reconcile pure Islamism with pure Christianity; the more both become corrupt, the more they diverge into hopeless irreconcilment. A century has elapsed since Mr. Sale declared his belief that the glory of overthrowing the Korán was reserved for Protestants; we believe that the toil will be diminished, if sufficient attention is paid to the fact, that the Korán contains in itself what may be called "a middle term between Mohammedanism and Christianity, namely, the doctrines of Islám as first propounded at Mecca."

The question of the authorship of the Korán was fiercely disputed during the life-time of Mohammed; those who performed the task of compilation for Abú-Bekr had the means of determining the point, but, from their manifest ignorance, were utterly incapable of using them. There seems great probability in the conjecture of Golius, that the letters we find prefixed to several of the chapters, whose explanation has defied the conjectures of commentators, were the private marks of Mohammed's secretaries and assistants; of the great test, uniformity of style, few Western scholars could venture to pronounce a judgment, and the Orientals are utterly ignorant of criticism. As far, however, as we may venture to conjecture, the substance of the Korán was obtained from a great variety of sources, but all the merits of its form belong to Mohammed. If he had an assistant, we should adopt the tradition, that he was a Syrian Christian rather than a Jew.

The orthodox Mohammedans believe that the Korán is uncreate and eternal, subsisting in the very essence of God; they say that it was brought down to the lowest heaven by

* This distinction appears to have been pointed out by Al Jahedh, who said that the Korán was a body which might sometimes be turned into a man and sometimes into a beast. "The two faces of the Korán," is also no unusual phrase with Arabic writers. See Pococke and D'Herbelot.

Gabriel, and then revealed piecemeal to the prophet. This matter was long the subject of bitter contention, and occasioned a civil war in the age of the Abasside Khaliphs.

All Mussulmans agree in according to their sacred book the greatest respect and veneration; they dare not touch it without being first legally purified, and when reading it, they never hold it lower than their girdles. They swear by it, consult it on all weighty occasions, inscribe sentences from it on their seals and banners, and never hear it quoted without expressing sentiments of esteem and obedience. An interesting anecdote is related of the respect which Hassan, the son of Ali, showed for the following passage: "Run with emulation, to obtain remission from your Lord; and paradise, whose breadth equalleth the heavens and the earth, which is prepared for the godly; who give alms in prosperity and adversity; who bridle their anger, and forgive men; for God loveth the beneficent." A slave having spilled a dish boiling hot on Hassan, fell at his feet, and repeated the words, "Paradise is for those who bridle their anger:" Hassan answered, "I am not angry:" the slave continued, "and forgive men:" "I forgive you," said Hassan. The slave, however, finished the verse, "for God loveth the beneficent." "Since it is so," said Hassan, "I give you your freedom, and four hundred pieces of gold."

Besides its distinctive name Korán, the book is called also, Al Forkán, or, "the distinguisher," because it distinguishes between good and evil, Al Mosháf, "the volume," and Al Kitáb, "the book;" just as we use the phrases Scripture and Bible, in an emphatic sense; it is sometimes also called Al Diklu, or, "the admonition," a name which is also given to the Pentateuch and the Gospel.

APPENDIX IV.

SPECIMENS OF MOHAMMEDAN PRAYERS.

Prayers to be said while performing Ablution.

THE Mussulman law permits the performance of religious exercises only after the body has been cleansed from every earthly stain, to remind the believer that he should address God with a clean heart, purified from every earthly thought.

Before commencing the Ablution.

“I AM going to purify myself from all bodily uncleanness, preparatory to commencing prayer, that holy act of duty, which will draw my soul near to the throne of the Most High. In the name of God, the great and mighty. Praise be unto God who has given us grace to be Mussulmans. Islamism is a truth, and infidelity a falsehood.”

When cleaning the Teeth.

“VOUCHSAFE, O God, as I clean my teeth, to purify me from my faults, and to accept my homage. O Lord, may the purity of my teeth, be for me a pledge of the whiteness of my face at the day of judgment.”

When rinsing the Mouth.

“O MY God, be propitious to Mohammed and his family. O my God, accompany me with thy grace, while I read in thy holy Korán, and recite thy most worthy praises. Teach me always to express gratitude for thy benefits, and do thou guide my worship.”

When washing the Nostrils.

“O MY God, if I am pleasing in thy sight, perfume me with the odours of paradise.”

When washing the Face.

“O MY God, whiten my countenance with thy splendour in this world, and the next; and on the day when the faces of the elect shall be whitened, (the day of judgment,) let mine not be black like those of thine enemies.”

When washing the Right Hand.

“O MY God, on the day of judgment, place the book of my actions in my right hand, and examine my account with favour*.”

When washing the Left Hand.

“O MY God, place not at the resurrection, the book of my actions in my left hand.”

When bathing the Head.

“O my God, cover me with thy mercy, and save me from the punishments which thou hast prepared for the wicked. Send down thy blessings upon me, and place me under the shadow of thy throne.”

When bathing the Ears.

“O MY God, place me in the number of those who listen to thy most holy word, and obey its precepts.”

When bathing the Neck.

“O MY God, save my neck from the yoke of sin; deliver me, O Lord, from its fetters and chains.”

When washing the Right Foot.

“O MY God, grant that I, my father and my mother, may be of the number of those whose feet shall stand firm on the terrible bridge of Al Sirát.”

When washing the Left Foot.

“O MY God, grant that in passing the bridge Al Sirát, my feet may not slip like those of the wicked. My God, direct

* The Mussulmans believe that a separate account is kept of each man's actions, which on the day of judgment will be placed in the right hand of the righteous, and the left of the wicked.

my paths in this present life. Make me ever grateful for thy favours."

When the Ablution is finished the Believer should rise up, and, drinking a little of the water that remains, say:

"PRAISE be unto God, who has created the heavens marvelously suspended over our heads. I confess that there is no God but the one true God, and that He has neither equal nor associate. I confess that Mohammed is his servant and prophet. O thou, whose praise shall be ever upon my lips, I confess that thou alone art God, and that thou hast no equal. I have sinned, I have betrayed my own soul. Alas! I ask pardon of my transgressions, I sincerely repent them. Pardon me, O Lord! turn thyself towards me, thou who art above all things merciful and gracious. My God, grant that I may be of the number of those who are truly converted unto thee; of those whom thou hast deigned to purify. Place me among thy faithful servants. Render me patient and grateful. May thy omniscient power be ever present to my memory; may I praise thee night and morning!

"My God, grant that I may acquit myself perfectly of my ablutions and my prayer. Deign to grant me entire forgiveness of my sins, and to afford me thy favour and protection, thou who art the most merciful of merciful beings."

THE PUBLIC PRAYER ON FRIDAYS.

THIS prayer is recited at noon, but only in cities subject to a Mussulman monarch, and in presence of the sovereign or his representative. The authorized collection of traditions declares that attendance on this act of devotion is imperatively required from all the faithful. "He," says Mohammed, "who without sufficient excuse shall three weeks successively fail to attend the public prayers offered up by our ministers every Friday, shall be deemed to have abjured the faith." All labours are suspended while this service is being performed; but, before its commencement, and after its completion, it is lawful for Mussulmans to attend to their worldly business.

We shall only quote the introductory part of the prayer, as used by the Sonnites.

“In the name of God, the most gracious and merciful. Praise be unto the Most High, who alone can deliver us from evil, and place us beyond the reach of temptation; who alone can comprehend the ardent aspirations of his fervent worshippers in heaven and upon the earth; who is the sole object of human adoration. All mortals are feeble; He alone is powerful: all mortals are poor; He alone is rich. He alone grants favour and assistance. He pardons transgressions; He receives the penitent; and, though he punishes the froward, yet is he mild and merciful. There is no God but Him; there is no other Creator than the Most High. To our souls He grants spiritual nourishment, even as He supplies our bodies with temporal food. There is no God but God; in that He heareth and seeth all things; He alone is God, in that from Him no secrets are hid; He alone is God.

“Moses declared, when God spoke to him face to face, in Sinai, ‘There is no God but God.’

“Jonas, when the Most High addressed him in the belly of the great fish, ‘There is no God but God.’

“Joseph, when God consoled him in the bottom of the well, into which he had been cast by his envious brethren, likewise confessed, ‘There is no God but God.’

“Abraham, in the burning fiery furnace, into which he had been cast by the tyrannical Nimrod, when God appeared to him, also confessed, ‘There is no God but God.’

“Yes, we confess that there is no God but the one great and eternal God, who has no equal or associate.

“We confess that our lord and master, Mohammed, is his servant and his prophet. O God! be thou propitious to him, his servants and companions; bless him and grant him peace.

“Know ye that this world is perishable and its pleasures transitory. We pass our days in slavery to obtain food, and death soon comes to terminate them. O my brethren, we have a feeble body, an uncertain tenure of life, a deep sea to traverse,

a devouring flame to dread. The bridge Al Sirát is very narrow, the balance very just; the day of the resurrection is not very distant. The Judge of that great day will be a glorious Lord! In that awful day, Adam, the pure in God, will say, 'O my soul!' Noah, the prophet of God; Abraham, the friend of God; Ishmael, the sacrificed to God; Joseph, the confessor of God; Moses, the acquaintance of God; Jesus Christ, the spirit of God, will all utter the same words. But our prophet, our intercessor, will exclaim, 'O my people! O my [people!]' And the Most High (may his glory shine in all eyes, and his blessings descend upon all nations!) will pronounce these consoling words, 'O my servants! O my servants! they shall have nothing to dread; sorrow shall not come nigh them.' "

IN the mosques of Persia and India some moral verses from the Persian poet Sadi are introduced, of which we have ventured to give a free translation.

ALAS! how fleeting is our mortal breath!
How brief the passage from man's birth to death!
E'en o'er our day-spring spreads a sudden gloom,
And shades us in the darkness of the tomb.

Though countless treasures swell thy ample stores,
And banded warriors watch around thy doors;
Beside thy sumptuous couch dark forms appear,
And soon transfer thee to an humble bier;
Earth shall afford thee but a narrow bed,
Upon thy pampered flesh shall worms be fed.

While low in dust the proud, the haughty lie,
The pious poor are coursers of the sky,
Shall leave the sorrows of dull earth behind,
And mount to heaven, more rapid than the wind.

Though in life's gardens thou art now a rose,
Whose opening buds unnumbered sweets disclose;
Yet from thy grave shall weeds pernicious spring,—
The thistle wound there, and the nettle sting.

Man! sunk in crime, forgetful of thy Lord,
Blind to his works, deaf to his gracious word!

Attend and learn, ere yet it be too late,
 How dark, how dreadful is the sinner's fate !
 Envy no more thy brother and thy friend,
 To words divine an ear attentive lend.
 The day shall come, when by thy deeds alone
 Thy endless destiny shall be made known ;
 Oh ! let that thought, for ever in thy mind,
 The hand, the tongue, the heart in fetters bind !
 From human eyes in vain is guilt concealed,
 To God thine every action stands revealed :
 And He, with justice, on the final day,
 Thy deeds of good and ill shall in the balance weigh.

Thy friends already tread that awful road,
 Prepare thou soon to quit thy frail abode.
 In dull inaction here no longer stay,
 But warning take from Sadi's faithful lay.

You who in towers and castles place your trust,
 Learn that your strength and you shall sink in dust ;
 A voice angelic ever cries aloud,
 In awful warnings to the great and proud ;
 " Have sons, that graves with tenants may be filled,
 And mighty palaces for ruin build ! "

After these warnings the minister continues :

" MAY God bless us all in the sublime Korán ; may the reading of its sacred verses ever produce spiritual blessings to our souls ! Yes God, the Most High, is beneficent, generous, a just sovereign over his creatures, compassionate, and merciful."

The minister sits down for a few minutes ; he then rises, and recites a prayer for Mohammed and those who aided him in the establishment of Islámism.

THE MUSSULMAN ROSARY.

It is composed of ninety-nine small and one large bead ; with each an attribute of God is recited, except the last. In Arabic all, or nearly all, the attributes are expressed by a single

word, a peculiarity which it is impossible to preserve in a translation.

- O Compassionate !
- O Merciful !
- O King !
- O Holy One !
- 5 O Saviour !
- O Protector !
- O Defender !
- O Glorious !
- O Absolute Sovereign !
- 10 O Magnificent !
- O Creator !
- O Author of Nature !
- O Maker of the Universe !
- O Thou who forgivest sins !
- 15 O Conqueror !
- O Truly Generous !
- O Preserver !
- O Victorious !
- O Omniscient !
- 20 O Omnipotent !
- O Boundless !
- O Humbler of the proud !
- O Elevator of the humble !
- O Author of all honour !
- 25 O Author of all humiliation !
- O Thou who hearest !
- O Thou who seest !
- O Judge !
- O Just !
- 30 O Thou worthy of love !
- O Truly Wise !
- O Great !
- O Gracious !
- O Rewarder of thy servants !
- 35 O Most Mighty !
- O Most High !
- O Guardian !

- O Thou who affordest nourishment !
O Avenger !
40 O Sublime !
O Beneficent !
O Observer of actions !
O Hearer of prayer !
O Boundless !
45 O Source of knowledge !
O Source of glory !
O Thou that lovest us !
O Cause of all causes !
O Witness !
50 O Truth !
O Governor !
O Strong !
O Permanent !
O Master !
55 O Object of our praises !
O Thou that calledst being from nothing !
O Calculator !
O Author of the Resurrection !
O Giver of life !
60 O Giver of Death !
O Living One !
O Enduring !
O Source of discovery !
O Worthy of all honour !
65 O Thou Only One !
O Immortal !
O Powerful !
O Thou to whom nothing is impossible !
O Thou who existest before all ages !
70 O Thou who existest after all time !
O First of Beings !
O Ancient of days !
O Eternal !
O Invisible !
75 O Manifest !
O Our Patron !
O Our Benefactor !

- O Thou who dost accept our repentance!
 O Thou who dost justify us!
 80 O Thou who dost punish!
 O Benign!
 O Sovereign of Nature!
 O Possessor of glory and majesty!
 O Equitable!
 85 O Thou who wilt re-assemble us at the day of judgment!
 O Rich!
 O Source of riches!
 O Lord!
 O Thou, who dost deliver us from evil!
 90 O Thou, who dost permit evil to come!
 O Author of all good!
 O Illuminator!
 O Guide!
 O Marvellous!
 95 O Unchangeable!
 O Thou, whose inheritance is the Universe!
 O Director!
 O Patient!
 O Mild!
 100 O God!

APPENDIX V.

SELECT APHORISMS OF ALI-EBN-ABU-TALEB, THE NEPHEW
AND SON-IN-LAW OF MOHAMMED.

THERE are many collections of the proverbs and moral precepts attributed to Ali*; the most perfect is that published in Oxford, A.D. 1806; but this is too long to be translated, and we have therefore taken the selection published by Vatier at Paris, A.D. 1660, in preference. It is to be observed that these

* See Chapter III.

sentences are ranged in alphabetical order, according to the letter with which they begin in Arabic.

In the name of God, the compassionate and merciful.

ELIF.

The friends of this world are but spies on our conduct.

Despair is the death of the soul.

Concealment of afflictions is the noblest proof of courage.

BE.

A virtuous father and mother are preferable to an illustrious line of ancestors.

Give this world for the other, and you will make a good exchange.

Early rising will ensure fortune.

Man's appetites are his worst enemies.

The performance of good actions is the only real pleasure.

Man is proved by his words.

Spoil not an act of kindness by talking about it.

He who gives graciously, gives doubly.

ZE.

Place your confidence in God ; He is all-sufficient.

To adjourn a bad action is to begin it.

In old age correct the faults of youth.

Consider well before you undertake any thing ; for thus only can your success be certain.

Mutual respect is the bond of friendship.

Avoid evil and you shall obtain honour.

THE.

Three things destroy man, pride, avarice, and pleasure.

One-third of faith is knowledge, one-third modesty, and one-third generosity.

The dust of the grave can alone satisfy the appetite of the greedy.

Peace of mind is a habit that does not wear out.

Secresy doubles a kindness.

Justice is the support of royalty.

Praise of a benefactor is seemingly a request for a second benefit.

The devotion of the ignorant is superstition, that of the instructed is piety.

Visits renew friendship.

The world is full of evil.

He who visits the humble proves that he is free from pride.

SIN.

The pleasures of this world are but vanity.

Want of sincerity is the greatest defect.

The ordinary actions of men reveal the secrets of their thoughts.

Complaints are the arms of the feeble.

Modesty elevates man.

SHIN.

Boasting is the disgrace of knowledge.

The avarice of a rich man brings its own punishment.

White hairs announce the approach of death.

The rich miser is poorer than the liberal beggar.

Habit renders every action easy.

He is a wicked man whom others fear.

SAD.

The prayers of night give prosperity to the day.

Keep company with the good, and you need not fear the bad.

Silence is the protection of the ignorant.

Piety is preserved by temperance and ruined by sensual indulgence.

DDAD.

The designs of him, who trusts in any thing but God, cannot succeed.

A blow from a friend is more severely felt than a blow from a stranger.

That which closes the heart (avarice) is worse than that which closes the hand (poverty).

The world is too narrow for the abode of two enemies.

ITA.

He who trusts in God is always satisfied.

Competency and health are the elements of happiness.

Man's life is long when his labours are short.

Mix not in disputes.

Short hopes bring long pains.

ZZA.

Injustice leads man to his ruin.

The king is the shadow of God upon earth.

Injustice, like a cloud, hides the light of faith.

The shadow of the lame man is distorted,

AIN.

The contented man is a king.
Your enemy is within you.
The shame of poverty is less than that of riches.
A wise enemy is more valuable than a foolish friend.

GIM, OR DSCHIM.

Be liberal of what you possess.
The reign of falsehood endures but a moment, that of truth is eternal.
Brevity is the perfection of discourse.
It is an excellent thing to have good companions.

HHA.

Mildness of character is a sure protection.
Knowledge is the ornament of man.
The crimes of children burn the hearts of parents.
Rash courage ruins man.
The tree that has no roots cannot attain perfection.
A business is a treasure.

KHA.

Fear God, and you will have no cause to fear any one else.
Resist yourself, and you shall have peace.
Describe your company, and you will describe yourself.
The fear of God purifies the heart.
The best riches are those employed in the service of God.

DAL.

Resignation to the divine will is a remedy for affliction.
Actions show a man's disposition, words his knowledge.
The good of the evil is the evil of the good.
The coin of the miser is as worthless as a pebble.
Religion consists not in words, but actions.
Repress your anger, and you will gain.

ZAL, OR DSAL.

Leave the presumptuous to his presumption.
A single offence counts for much, a thousand services for very little.
Man's baseness appears in his desires.
He that thinks humbly of himself, appears great in the eye of God.
The remembrance of youth is a sorrow in old age.

RE.

The sight of a friend is a pleasure.
Honour thy father, and thy son will honour thee.
Knowledge confers the highest rank.
Birth is the herald of death.
Adhere to justice even in wrath.

ZE.

Weigh men in their own balance.
Visit him who values your visits.

GHAIN.

The pain of death is less than that of an unpleasant companion.
The absent lose their share.
Anger, even when just, is disgraceful.

FE.

He is happy who escapes his own malice.
Man's actions reveal his origin.
Some care is lodged in every heart.
Benefits conferred on the ungrateful are lost.

KAF.

Avarice kills the miser.
Undertake nothing beyond your strength.
Good actions are the measure of a man's value.
A heart is hard when it is full.

CAF.

The word of God is the medicine of the soul.
Old age is a sufficient disease.
The envious man is sufficiently punished by envy itself.
Mildness is the perfection of knowledge.
The fact that the goods of this world are perishable should teach men
their true value.

LAM.

Soften your heart, and you will be beloved.
The empire of knowledge is changeless.
Every hatred may abate, except that which is combined with envy.
If man knew the value of future rewards!

MIM.

An ambitious heart has heavy anxieties.
The assembly of the learned closely resembles Paradise.
It is better to navigate a tempestuous sea, than live with the wicked.
Where the water is good the crowds assemble.
Man's merits are under his tongue.

NUN.

Sleep without care, and you will have the best bed in the world.
Obscure not the brightness of the hoary head by debauchery.
True honour dwells with good faith.

HE.

Follow not the advice of an enemy.
Thoughts of a future world occupy the happy, thoughts of the present,
the unfortunate.
Inordinate love of self is the ruin of man.
Give what you can afford, and you will receive thanks.

VAU.

To benefit the undeserving is to commit a crime.
He who hates not, loves not.
He who takes charge of an orphan obtains a blessing from God.

JE.

A calumniator does enduring evil in a moment.
Fear is past when the evil has arrived.

LAM-ELIF.

A courageous man is never poor.
A liar is devoid of honour.
He who has nothing superfluous is not rich.

THE END.

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